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A 'FEEL' FOR BEING AMERICAN

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

THE PRIMARIES: PROCESS & PRODUCT

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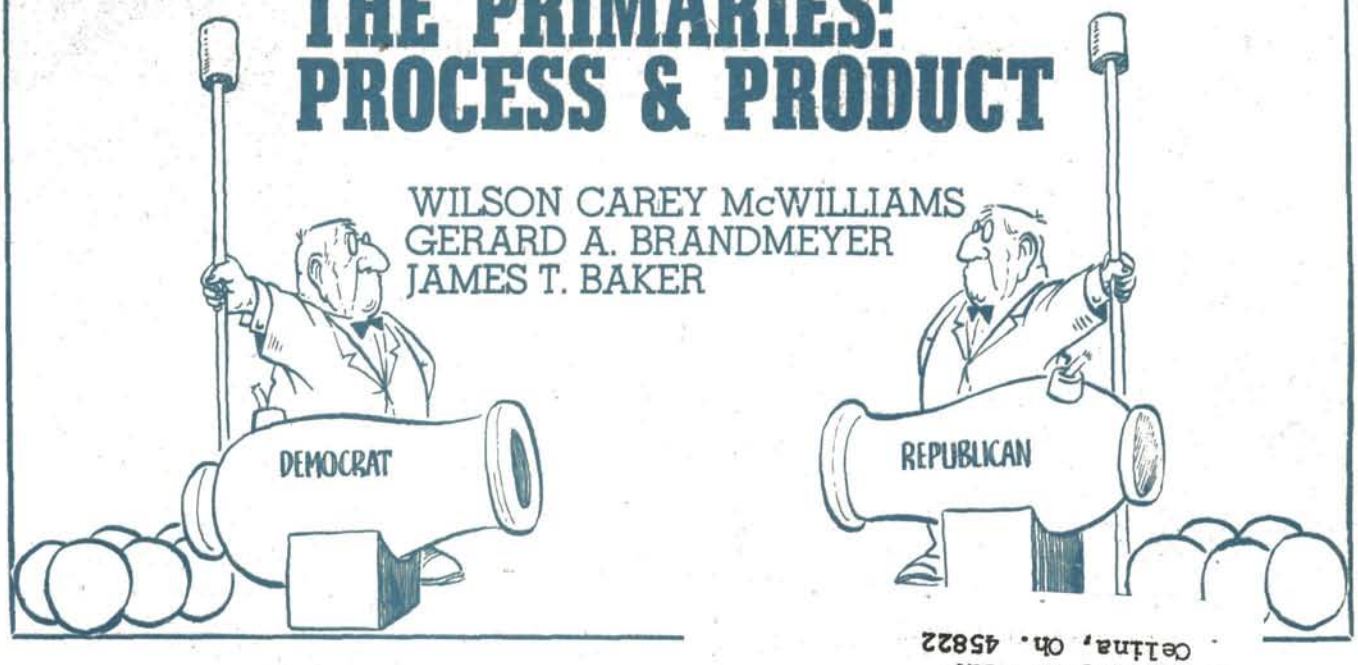

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NEWS & VIEWS

Scholars and Origins

The concept of the American Catholic Church as a dogmatic, authoritarian institution, restricting freedom of thought and hostile to science, is an old one fed partly by some historic Catholic blunders (Galileo) and more recently by some debatable sociological studies — the granddaddy of which may be the one in the December, 1931, *Scientific Monthly* reporting Unitarians to be 1,695 times more likely than Catholics to be listed among the nation's eminent scientists.

The 1931 conclusion — that "the conspicuous dearth of scientists among Catholics suggests that the tenets of the church are not consonant with scientific endeavor"—has been fostered, again perhaps by Catholic *faux pas*, but also by studies delving since into the social origins of American scientists and scholars. The latest example may be that by Kenneth R. Hardy in the August, 1974, *Science*.

Stephen Steinberg of the City University of New York, and author of *The Academic Melting Pot* (McGraw-Hill, 1974), takes on Hardy in the June issue of *Change*, a magazine concerned with higher education. After recalling some of the better known, if sometimes prejudicial, studies echoing the 1931 assertions, Steinberg challenges figures of Hardy, according to which Catholic institutions show the poorest rate of "productivity" of any denominational group —productivity being defined and measured in the study in terms of PhD production.

Steinberg zeroes in on Hardy's value measurements and most particularly on the tendency to construe a low rate of productivity as evidence of a defective intellectual and cultural ethos.

"His reasoning is altogether circular," comments Steinberg. "Because institutions are high or low in productivity, he infers that they exemplify a certain set of values. But he then asserts that these values constitute the principal reason that their productivity is high or low. Since he has no independent evidence on the value systems of institutions, he has no way of knowing whether differences in values explain differences in productivity."

Even Hardy's honor roll of merit comes under attack. "It should be noted," Steinberg observes, "that all but three of the 25 most productive institutions [according to Hardy's rating] are small, private colleges that are not major sources of doctorates in terms of absolute numbers even though they produce large numbers of PhDs relative to their size. In actuality, the University of California at Berkeley, the City College of New York, the University of Illinois, and Harvard, which produced the largest numbers of PhDs, turned out more future PhDs than all 25 colleges on Hardy's list. It is also noteworthy that the Catholic University of America and the University of Notre Dame, in terms of sheer numbers, produced more PhDs than 19 of the institutions on Hardy's list during this same period [1950-1961]."

(The top five of Hardy's 25 institutions are California Institute of Technology, Reed, Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore and the University of Chicago. No Catholic school made the top-25 list.)

Hardy's finding that Catholic institutions on the average have low rates of productivity is cast in a quite different light, asserts Steinberg, when it is remembered that these institutions, like their students, are only two or three generations removed from immigrant status, poverty, or both.

Steinberg's position, based on 1969 national surveys of both faculty and students and reflected in his *Melting Pot* book, is that Catholics are "rapidly improving their representation at all levels of American higher education."

Says Steinberg: "While Catholics constituted only 15 percent of faculty over 55 years of age, the figure rose to 20 percent among those under 35. Furthermore, Catholics were 25 percent of the nation's graduate students and 29 percent of the nation's undergraduates. The data point to the fact that Catholics are belatedly taking taking their place in American higher education and in the near future will be producing their numerical share of the nation's scholars and scientists."

In a final paragraph, Steinberg asserts that social science has grown wary of theories, such as Hardy's, that explain the success of some groups in terms of cultural virtues, and the failure of others in terms of cultural deficiencies. Accordingly, he presumes that Hardy's thesis will go the way of other theories that impute cultural superiority to the groups on the top of the social heap and inferiority to those on the bottom.

His is a pleasant hope . . . but maybe also a sanguine presumption given the very history that Steinberg cites in *Change*—to say nothing of the historic Catholic proclivity to contribute to the stereotyping of itself as anti-intellectual.

Peg Averill/LNS

Hold That Metaphor!

It seemed unlikely that for pure schmaltz the Superbowl invocation of a few years back by the R.C. Bishop of Miami would ever be topped. Or was it an Orange Bowl game invocation? Whatever, most feats are made to be topped, and that earlier invocation must now be placed second to one by Lutheran pastor Rev. Larry Christenson of San Pedro, Calif., delivered — appropriately — in Notre Dame University's football stadium, South Bend.

Rev. Christenson was speaking before some 30,000 Catholic charismatics gathered for the recent Continental Conference of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal:

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a football squad, which is assembled under a Coach who formed it into a team that moved with such order and precision, in startling innovation, that it subdued all its opponents."

Rev. Christenson was off and running.

The Lord's "team," first of all, follows the rules. Which means that "your freedom operates within fixed boundaries." Breaking the rules "does not bring freedom, it disqualifies you."

Secondly, the Lord's team practices fundamentals, and submits to training and discipline. While the discipline may be strict, "there is freedom in two ways—through the training one develops freedom of proficiency and in the training the Coach recognizes where exceptions are called for."

It goes without saying that the team needs teamwork; it also follows a "strategy," meaning that "both order and freedom play a part in the Lord's masterplan for victory." If the team follows orders—"those of the Coach and His delegated authority" —and shows some initiative, then "in Him there is victory." . . . Rev. Christenson didn't predict the score.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Jobs for the Jobless

Claremont, Calif.

To the Editors: All thanks and a salute to *Commonweal* for publishing the article entitled "The Real Welfare Chiselers."

Al Sheahen did an outstanding job in that article, contrasting as he did the tiny 4/10 of one percent of all welfare cases where fraud has been found with the incredible waste in military contracts.

I would like to add one more dimension to the story. A few months ago the city of San Francisco gave notice that a small number of street maintenance jobs were to be filled. Thousands of unemployed people stood in line all night so as to be first in line to apply for those jobs.

Just recently the Park Service in a Southern California county announced that it would be hiring some 30-odd workers. 35,000 people, some having traveled many miles, showed up to apply.

Yet, as Mr. Sheahen points out, the prevailing attitude of the affluent is one of regarding those who are out of work as being somehow themselves responsible for their joblessness.

A survey of a few years ago in Los Angeles County showed that well over half the people dependent on welfare payments were little children while another large block of them were blind, disabled, infirm and very old people. At that time only 2 percent of those seeking welfare payments were able-bodied men.

As a result of what seems to me nothing short of cruel, presidential vetos of Congressional legislation that would have put hundreds of thousands of jobless back to work, that percentage is larger now. But not because the overwhelming majority of able-bodied welfare recipients don't want to work. It is because they have been deliberately denied their right to do so.

It is to be remembered that large-

(Continued on page 446)

NEWS & VIEWS: 418 **CORRESPONDENCE:** 419
EDITORIAL: 419
WASHINGTON REPORT: Softening of a Hard Line: *Frank Getlein* 420
THE EXPERIENCE OF TAIZE: *Brian Wicker* 421
A 'FEEL' FOR BEING AMERICAN: *Raymond A. Schroth* 423
DOWN WITH THE PRIMARIES: *Wilson Carey McWilliams* 427
JIMMY CARTER'S RELIGION: *James T. Baker* 430
POLITICS & ABORTION: *Gerard A. Brandmeyer* 432
PRESS: The All-Time Day Story: *Thomas Powers* 434
THE SCREEN: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 436
VERSE: *Thomas Reiter* 437
JEWEL WITHOUT PRICE: *Saul Maloff* 438
HUNGERING FOR HISTORY: *Wallace Fowlie* 442
BOOKS: *Philip Terzian, William J. Lanouette* 444
ILLUSTRATIONS: *Front cover: horseman, Liberation News Service; cannoneers, Vadillo Siempre, Mexico/Rothco; page* **438,** *Richard de Combray*

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THE REAL CARTER

If, in a religious sense, a man's character is usually revealed in the way in which he accepts defeat, it is also true that, in another sense, we can judge a man by how he behaves when he wins. If winning is not everything to Jimmy Carter, it is certainly a great deal. He has been quoted—in one of his least fuzzy and least attractive remarks—as saying: "Show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser." Indeed, one of the disquieting things about Carter—and the thundering rush of the whole Democratic party to embrace both him and his positions—is that not the thirst but the lust for victory may so dilute the core principles of Democratic liberalism that the July Democratic Convention will resemble in tone if not in content the Republican Convention of 1972 and the Presidential campaign will offer the public the intellectual challenge of a revival meeting.

Victory should free a man to be himself. Carter has, he would maintain, been himself all along. But there is no question that he has consistently trimmed his positions and his language so as to alienate the least number of voters and find some common ground with, if possible, every American. This is not, in itself, bad. A true leader must find words that find resonance in every heart. To use power for the public good, first you have to win it. The obvious danger is that a man who consistently trims his positions to gain power will eventually begin trimming his principles to maintain it. In time, as it did with Nixon, the line between principles and pragmatism can blur; and some of those who have put their trust in Jimmy Carter now fear they may be left with not a vision of a more just and "compassionate" America but a mirage that may tempt them further into the desert of disillusionment.

There are a number of ways in which Jimmy Carter can demonstrate soon that he has been and will be worthy of this trust and that victory

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and power have given him true freedom rather than making him more remote and possessive. One is to open up the Vice Presidential selection process. Thirteen of our 38 Presidents have been Vice Presidents first. Carter's choice will indicate what kind of man he himself really is: whose principles best fit his policies and the nation's needs; how comfortable he is with another strong personality; how far he will compromise principle for imagined political advantage. He should tell us now which men he is *really* considering and let the press and the people look them over before the Convention. Second, although he is uncomfortable with the "liberal establishment," when he writes his acceptance speech he should remember his own, and every Democrat's, roots in Jeffersonian liberalism, which means, "Trust the people." Not "Trust me."

WASHINGTON REPORT

SOFTENING OF A HARD LINE

It would be a cheap shot and a bum rap to say that American foreign policy follows the election returns, worse still the primary returns, but something has got into Henry Kissinger in recent days and the easy explanation is that all those people who were urged so long to "send a message" to Washington finally got one through.

The man who had to be dragged kicking and screaming out of Indochina by a Congress which had indeed got a message from the electorate, the man who took out his spite on Congress by staging a limited run mini-war against the Cambodians over a strayed merchant ship, the man who gloomily foresaw the Untergang des Abendlands in the Congressional refusal to let him bomb the Angolans for a while, that man has abruptly come out for majority rule in Rhodesia and against police state torture and all-around violations of human rights by the regime he helped, one way or another, to establish in Chile.

What has got into him? From one point of view, it hardly matters. Even in the unlikely event that President Ford captures the nomination of his own party and wins election to the position he now holds in fee to Richard Nixon, it would be even more unlikely that Kissinger will stay with him for four more years. The fact that Ford has said he plans to keep his secretary on only makes it more certain that he'll go no matter what. Ford, after all, wasn't going to pardon Nixon and wasn't going to run for the office he received as a gift. It isn't that he lies, exactly; he just talks a lot without thinking much.

Kissinger's departure as such, however, matters less than you might think from reading his faithful press gang over the years. The press gang was enchanted by Kissinger chiefly because he seemed to be the only member of the Nixon administration who had read a book and could crack a joke, accomplishments easily overvalued by people who make their living by writing and spend a lot of their free time hanging around newsrooms cracking jokes. When the house wit was Spiro Agnew with additional dialogue by William Safire, obviously Henry Kissinger sounded like Oscar Wilde on a good day. Hence, he was heavily overplayed. Actually, by definition, he has done nothing—except for those jokes—not approved or initiated by his successive masters who in turn have faithfully reflected the established or emerging point of view of the foreign policy community.

And that is why the sudden emergence of Kissinger following a soft line is worth consideration. Latin-American military governments practicing torture, illicit arrest and murder of their subjects have never particularly disturbed the American foreign policy community before. It was *de trop* to bring the matter up unless you had to; it was something people would rather not think about, let alone talk about; but there were plenty of what members of the community, starting at the top, regarded as ample justifications for tolerating such conduct.

The root one was anti-Communism. Reformers tended to be leftists, Allende being the latest, hardly the last, example. From the beginnings of our Republic there has been a powerful school of thought that placed ultimate reliance upon the propertied class, said to "have a stake" in the country. Transfer that assumption to Latin America and the people you find who have a stake in the country are the big landowners, the natural resource exploiters doing business with American-based multinationals, and the military officer class recruited from and dedicated to protecting the interests of both.

The vision of a Latin-America substantially gone Communist has always terrified the foreign policy community and, in theory, not always unreasonably so. If you grant that Communism is a worldwide, unified conspiracy directed from Moscow and aiming at absolute domination of the globe by the Russians, a powerful Communist base in this hemisphere, let alone continental control, is worth worrying about. Our foreign policy community thought about it in much the way that the corresponding community in the Kremlin and related universities felt about the nuclear-tipped missile encirclement of the Soviet Union they saw taking place through the American system of alliances.

With such a vision of impending doom and with the

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basic operating principle that a government's first obligation was to survive, the tolerance of torture goes without saying. On that principle and in fear of that vision, our government systematically violated the civil rights of its own citizens on a scale not yet fully determined. Why on earth should it be expected to cavil at similar treatment, worse only in degree, inflicted on its citizens by an ally in the cause of freedom? Far from indulging in any such caviling, our governments under all administrations for a long time now have cooperated, helping military regimes to power and, in the judicious opinion of a lot of people with the background to know, actually exporting methods and machines of torture to such allies.

Now, abruptly, that whole approach has been dropped by one of its most dedicated practitioners. On Rhodesia, Henry Kissinger might reasonably have been expected to say that yes, of course, we were in favor of majority rule, that's the kind of society we are, but we do not presume to dictate to friendly nations what style they shall follow in purely domestic affairs. He hasn't. He has said forthrightly that the United States looks forward to the establishment of majority, that is black, rule in that country and will do what it can to hasten such a transformation.

Similarly, on form, Kissinger might have been expected to point out that reports of torture by the right-wing militarist government in Chile were no doubt highly exaggerated, that at any rate such a government was preferable to the Marxist-induced chaos that preceded it, and further, if it came to that, what do you know about torture in the cellars of the Kremlin, Charley? That's what I call torture. Again, he didn't say anything like that, but speaking in an OAS context, bluntly told the Pinochet junta to take off the brass knuckles. As with the man sinking his teeth into rump steak of bulldog on the hoof, that's news.

It is reasonable to assume that these two remarkable reversals have not come about because of a sudden attack of conscience in the soul of Henry Kissinger. For the hardy Metternichian, conscience is a power of indeterminate strength that occasionally just may be appealed to in public diplomacy. It is certainly not something the Metternichian permits himself. If Kissinger has abruptly come out against disenfranchisement and torture on the part of totally reliable anti-Communist governments, it can only be because he—and therefore to a greater or lesser extent, already or very soon now, the foreign policy community—has concluded that disenfranchisement and torture don't pay anymore or won't pay much longer.

In both instances, of course, there were regional groupings of nations pleased by Kissinger's remarks; he may therefore be said to have been following the traditional method of allying himself with the majority of those concerned, eliminating the risk of isolation in the area. Even that, of course, would be a great step forward, from a humanitarian point of view, from the days in the last four administrations when humane concerns were taken as a sign of weaknesses and therefore abjured even when they coincided with those of *realpolitik*.

But there is a good chance that the change indicates something more, that the foreign policy community is at last ready to give up on the hard line that has brought it and the nation so much disaster since 1960, gained so little; that the community is willing to believe that something like the "third world" actually exists as a thing in itself, not merely as a target area for the machinations and maneuvers of the Communists, the countermoves of the Free Worlders in Washington.

Actually, the community acted on that perception in the matter of China and has without thinking about it much, acted on it in regard to Yugoslavia for thirty years now. It is time and overtime for the community to catch up with and realize what it obviously already knows. If that realization lies behind Kissinger's about-face, it is the best news yet for the humanitarians, who have always represented the principal enemy to the realists. We may yet construct a foreign policy upon the principles and manner of operation we hope to practice in our own lives and even make it work.

FRANK GETLEIN

The Experience Of Taize

The Taizé community is an ecumenical monastery in Burgundy, only a few miles from the ancient monastic settlement of Cluny, and set in the midst of rich wine country. But it isn't itself rich, especially as far as Easter visitors are concerned. The community was founded after the war by Roger Schutz, a French Protestant, with the explicit idea of reviving the monastic idea but in an ecumenical setting and as a means of reconciling the warring interests not only of different Christian traditions but also of nations. There are now about seventy brothers there, representing half a dozen languages, various theological and denominational traditions, and several continents, but bound together by the traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and a special form of communal liturgy.

At Easter time, a huge crowd of Taizé followers descends upon the little village on the top of the hill. This year by Easter Sunday, there must have been upwards of ten thousand people in the vicinity swamping the community and the local inhabitants with a vivid conglomeration of rucksacks, tents, beards and guitars. Not surprisingly on getting there the new arrival from Eng-

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land sustains a pretty powerful culture shock. For the average Britisher's conception of a monastery is likely to be that of an ancient moss-covered stone church with cloisters and outbuildings to match, surrounded by green swards and picturesque landscape, with quiet farms and lowing cattle in the background, and perhaps a few white-habited men dotted around the locality telling their beads or minding their own business, in a gentle timeless atmosphere of calm and peace. Despite the fact that many monasteries are urban rather than rural communities, the image of Hopkins's nun taking the veil is still powerful:

I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the heavens dumb
And out of the swing of the sea.

But Taizé at Easter time is neither city nor country: rather it takes on the character of a shanty town. It is like one of those modern phenomena that mushrooms after a political or volcanic upheaval: I mean a refugee camp. What grass there once was on the top of Taizé hill has long been reduced to mud and gravel by the boots and sneakers of the milling crowds, the ground sheets of the tented encampments and the wooden shacks that give what little feeling of permanence there is in this eloquent embodiment of the transitoriness of life. Only the huge concrete church, like one of the hangars at the new National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, stands out, rigidly fixed, amidst the seething mass of humanity in transit from the cradle to the grave, or (more often) in transit from the queue that waits for food to the queue that waits to use the primitive French-style lavatories.

For me, it was this sense of being suddenly pitched into the situation of a refugee that was the most profound experience of Taizé at Easter. The liturgy in the church (enormously expanded, to accommodate the crowds, by the addition of an immense circus-tent at the back) was impressive, but by the very nature of the case, impersonal and passive. For my money, it was too massive to be involving, too multitudinous to be moving.

On the other hand, the sheer physical conditions of the camp: the endless waiting for something to happen, the almost total absence outside the church of any hope of a quiet moment to oneself, the continual press of warm, unwashed bodies on every side, the thousands upon thousands of identical portions of food doled out to the waiting multitudes, the long searches for a square patch of earth on which to squat and consume them, the squalid crudity of the sanitation, the acres of army-surplus tents—all these inescapable facts combined to form a profound and eloquent reminder of the essentials of the Christian experience.

Quite simply, Taizé threw you back on your own resources. It tested your capacity for survival, as a human being, in conditions of gross poverty and deprivation. But it also tested your capacity for transcending this basic condition, and becoming not merely human but even superhuman. For if the most obvious impression of Taizé was that of a refugee camp, one did not have to probe far below the surface to find also that it was a community of love.

In the church—as in most other churches—there was plenty of talk about love. What was different about Taizé was that outside the church, that talk had to be translated into action. For example, by the sharing-out of blankets in the cold spring nights; by the patient waiting in queues for food, in the rain or the sun; by the readiness to welcome the stranger into one's tent in the middle of night; by the assumption that everyone else was a friend who wanted to communicate rather than a stranger you wanted to exclude.

By this sort of test, Taizé must be rated an outstanding success. The fear, the disappointment, the disgust even that the newcomer must experience on his first sight of Taizé, at least if he comes from a middle-class background in a relatively rich society (as I guess the vast majority did) certainly changed (I can only speak for myself) by the time the bus arrived to take our group home on Easter Monday. For though the physical conditions were the same, the meaning inherent in them had been transformed. Not only were they now familiar, and even beginning to be taken for granted as the normal background to one's life: they had a significance that was not to be grasped at first. The poverty, the deprivation of domestic comfort, the loss of privacy, the sheer physical strain: instead of being merely terrifying and repulsive, they had become purposeful, a deliberately calculated piece of educational therapy, even a symbolic political gesture. For now one could understand, perhaps in a way not obtainable anywhere else, how the other half of the world lives. But further than this, how at the same time, given love, it might live.

Taizé, it might be said, is an example of an "alternative society" in action: a society based on a radically different set of principles from those governing "the world." Perhaps I might mention here, for the benefit of any *Commonweal* readers who might be in England in the summer, that an organization called "The Alternative Society" is running a short summer-school, or "mini-university," in Swindon, Gloucestershire, August 2-14, to study alternatives in health, housing and energy provision. It will be organized on the cheapest possible basis to enable anyone to attend, however short of cash, and promises to be an intriguing venture in learning and living together. Details from Stan Windass, The Alternative Society, 9 Morton Avenue, Kidlington, Oxford.

BRIAN WICKER

(*Brian Wicker is* Commonweal's *regular correspondent in Great Britain.*)

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A 'FEEL' FOR BEING AMERICAN

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

Reflections on the Bicentennial

I write this from Cornwall-on-Hudson, for me one hour and fifteen minutes north of Fordham University in the Bronx. I am, in many ways, in the most American place in the world, the first gateway to the New World. Outside my window is the Storm King Mountain from whose bald summit I can look North and South to the horizon, up and down the Hudson River Valley. With so little effort I can enter the imaginations of the men who have lived by the River and taken some new sense of themselves from their feeling of the place—such a representative mixture of American artistry, patriotism and greed as Washington Irving, John Jay, Jay Gould, and the painters of the Hudson River school.

Across the River and to the North is Hyde Park where, on an old Dutch estate, the brave and crippled bones of Franklin D. Roosevelt lie beside those of his strong and lovely wife.

When I was a little boy growing up in Trenton, New Jersey, I had four ways of getting some sense of myself as an American. The first was from my father who had won the Distinguished Service Cross in World War I by singlehandedly wiping out a machine-gun nest full of Huns, and who now, on national holidays, showed us how to display our huge American Flag on the front porch. The second was through World War II, the parades, the weapons' displays—mortars, tanks, machine guns—in the park, the "Star Spangled Banner" played, sung and projected on the screen between double features at Sunday night movies, the air-raid drills at night, and finally the gold star going up in the windows when sons were killed.

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The third was Trenton itself. We had hosted the Battle of Trenton, we had a Battle Monument which today looks down on an impoverished neighborhood; and every year a bunch of local college students dress up in Revolutionary costumes and reenact George Washington's conquest of the Delaware River ice chunks and his surprise Christmas Eve routing of the sleeping Hessians.

The fourth was Franklin D. Roosevelt. We knew through him—his smile, his wit, his voice, his "unbounded determination," his hope, his definition of the presidency as a position of moral leadership—that the government—and thus the nation and ourselves—was *good*. And it indicates something about America's need to *feel* the essence of its leaders that so many presidents and candidates since Roosevelt have tried to make us think, by appropriating his rhetoric and style, that he was still alive in them. Not long ago we learned that Roosevelt was, for many years, involved with two women who were not his wife. But this disclosure does not seem to have weakened the power of his spirit to inspire us. At least neither one was a mafia moll.

A few minutes to the South is West Point. The Point is having its Bicentennial cheating scandal, the biggest in its 174-year history, and its Bicentennial cover-up. A lieutenant named Lincoln, an attorney for a cadet so wickedly un-American as to weep under the cruelty of hazing and make up an excuse for his tears, is being shipped out for having publicly criticized the honor committee.

Any anniversary is a decision to reflect, to go back to the beginnings and ask how faithful we have been to the ideals that first set us on our way. At its best an anniversary is like a spiritual retreat, a return to the basics, the roots, a retapping of the deeper well of

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human consciousness where the individual knows instinctively that he is at home with himself, with his community, his land, and his God. In this analogy the nation is like the person with a collective memory, a homogeneity of character, an enduring identity and self-concept, and those human qualities like pride, humility, contrition and hope that give it power to be reborn.

This is our problem. Collectively Americans may be the least reflective—because least certain of their common identity—people in the world. As a people, we are not—as some slick nostalgic Bicentennial promotion is making us appear—a single painting, a canvas by John Trumbull, John Singleton Copley, or Benjamin West. We are more like a collage, a gestalt of a thousand disconnected but overlapping and interacting images coming together as a single visual impression, or a huge grammar school choir in a "changing" neighborhood where every kid is allowed to sing publicly whether he/she can carry a tune or not.

We are color and noise—and power—but, today at least, partly because we refuse to allow time for it, we are not very good at analyzing who we are. We delegate our self-scrutiny. Indeed, this inability to get a conceptual hook on who we are has spawned a special species of "road" literature in which journalists or novelists like Bill Moyers, Dan Wakefield and John Steinbeck and TV reporters like CBS' Charles Kuralt prowl the small towns and roadside diners of the land hoping to catch and bottle whiffs of the American Spirit.

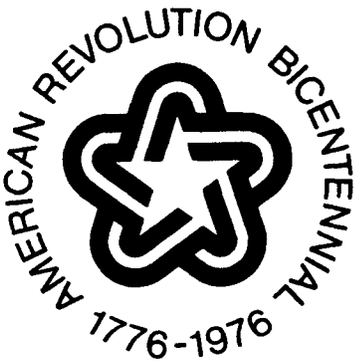
For some it is a trap. *Travels with Charley* was our Nobel Prize winner's most mediocre book—after the inflated *Look* magazine article, *America and Americans*. It is the story of a fading literary hero who, in much of the public mind, was the writer who most *was* America, trying to rekindle his creative powers by "going home again," by running the soil through his hands. But he had become a Middle American, benignly fascinated by the hideous "mobile home," comparing Niagara Falls to the Bond's Clothing Store advertising waterfall on Times Square, and tossing his garbage into the water like any polluting nomad.

It was 1960 and Steinbeck sensed it was a watershed year. Somehow he knew that young John Kennedy was going to pull us into a new spring, out of our "winter of discontent," and when the knights of Camelot carried the torch passed at Kennedy's inauguration into Vietnam Father Steinbeck went along to bless the battle, now part of the injustice he had made his name opposing.

So now we leave it to the media commentators to interview grey-templed historians on educational TV and the editors of *Saturday Review* (December 13, 1975) to invite "world figures" to comment on America's world impact and its literature. (Indira Gandhi confessed she was much moved by Thomas Paine and Henry David Thoreau—but did not say how much they would be allowed to publish in contemporary India.) We invite essayists to summon us to periods of national self-examination with about the same fervor and same results as the troops in my battery in the Army in the 1950s brought to their sessions with the tough chaplain who "really put it to them" and gave them a "royal chewing out."

I have been told by a Jesuit friend who has traveled in Europe recently that there is a great deal of interest there in our Bicentennial. But, on the level on which most Americans are touched, what has the Bicentennial wrought? A 23-year Englishman resident here suggests in this morning's *New York Times* (May 22) that we observe our Bicentennial on July 4th with 200 seconds of thoughtful silence. This is such a brilliant idea it will get nowhere. Other things are planned—an odd mixture of silliness, greed, irony and excellence. But, for the most part, the year will remain, as my student friend John Harney says, like the comet Khoutek, always coming, never really visible, but still already there.

Toward the end of June, Karl Thomas will take off



in a red, white and blue helium balloon, the "Spirit of '76," for England, France, or Spain. "I'm not afraid for my life," he said. "I'm only afraid of not making it. I don't want to fail." New York State will send a $1.5 million Bicentennial "Festival Barge" on a four-and-a-half month journey through its waterways loaded with historical memorabilia. American Airlines offers Revolutionary Fares with Bicentennial Day and Night Excursions. Manufacturers have made it "buy-centennial," attaching the Bicentennial label to every imaginable product (20,000 estimated in November 1975). A Bicentennial toilet seat, Rexall Minuteman vitamin tablets, a Bicentennial electric warming tray, a Mickey Mouse Bicentennial watch. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has published a special edition in red, white, and blue binding.

On Broadway the new Lerner and Lowe Bicentennial musical, "1600 Pennsylvania Avenue," a multimillion dollar upstairs-downstairs pageant about masters and black servants in the nineteenth-century White House, died within a week. And on TV, one *New York Times* critic (May 27) wrote: "If the Bicentennial had been a television series it would have been canceled after 13 weeks." The "historical" specials on Valley Forge, Tru-

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man, Walt Whitman, etc. glittered away unwatched. Only Roosevelt did well. Meanwhile millions stared glassy-eyed at "Helter Skelter," the Academy Awards and Miss America.

In Hopewell, New Jersey, a peaceful farm, once owned by our family friend, the late Representative Charles R. Howell, is being turned into a farm museum, with old tractors, harrows, wagons, a combine and carriages, plus cows, calves, chickens, roosters, pigs, horses, cats and dogs, all reproducing American farm life between 1920 and 1940. The nation is at some kind of a turning point when we realize that future generations are in danger of growing up without having seen a *real* farm, so now we must preserve them as if they were whooping cranes or Chippendale chairs.

In lower Manhattan a new $10 million pumping station will soon open to process the three million gallons of raw sewage the 110-story World Trade Center has been flushing into the Hudson River for six years. "It's the first time since Peter Stuyvesant that we're not going to be discharging raw sewage from the 'old city' of Manhattan . . ." said the Water Commissioner. "That's one way to celebrate the Bicentennial."

French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing has published a Bicentennial message in *Time*, then flown here in his Concorde polluting our air and damaging our ears. And Vice President Rockefeller used a Bicentennial address in Frankfurt to attack Russia and make himself look tough. In the Bronx 200 Bronx High School students staged a Bicentennial pageant using 10-foot-high puppets in a review of Baseball from the 18th to the 20th Centuries, "Changing Faces of Baseball: Myth or Reality?" in Yankee Stadium before the Baltimore game. (Except for the location, it sounds like a learned paper delivered at an American Studies convention.) But I heard about the most outlandish Bicentennial gimmick from Pat O'Connell, a student, on the lawn in front of my dorm: Bicentennial *air*—bottles of air from historic cities like Boston, Washington and Philadelphia, sold as a set!

But, from the political, historical and moral point of view, the most important fact about the Bicentennial is that it coincides with the 1976 presidential campaign. For, if the people themselves cannot or will not explicate the "state of the nation," directly they will do it in action, in how they respond to the candidates who claim to read their deepest yearnings and who now lay claim to their votes. At least the nation has been spared the obscenity of having Richard Nixon, who interpreted the American Dream in terms of his own emotionally deprived childhood and his own delayed eminence as the "most powerful man in the world," preside over its 200th birthday. In Gerald Ford we have simply one more vindication of Alexis de Toqueville's observation that American democracy, the great leveler, enshrines mediocrity in public life and Lord Bryce's claim that in the American political system great men get nowhere.

The true Ford, as a summing up of America's adolescent preoccupation with toughness, shines through in the Mayaguez incident—proof, if any were needed, that America, for all its power, is still a young man in a balloon, scared that it may "fail," even in doing something foolish.

Donald W. Russell observed in a letter to the *New York Times* (May 12, 1976), "One wonders . . . how the Founding Fathers might be received if they were running for the Presidency in 1976." The Founding Fathers were intellectuals, men of vision, political revolutionaries, radicals. "It's more likely that they would be turned off as too threatening. Perhaps it's even more likely that they would be thought un-American."

The presidential candidates have realized this all too well; and certainly the most depressing aspect of this campaign has been their refusal to face the dark underside of American life, to come to grips with our sick pride, racism, violence, corruption and imperialism. They know that the last candidate to promise to "talk sense to the American people," Adlai Stevenson, was quickly awarded status as full-time prophet (i.e. failure); and the only recent candidate to identify himself with Isaiah and appeal to the nation's sense of guilt over Vietnam was given the prophet's treatment as well.

Jimmy Carter, who will most likely be our next President, has correctly sensed that in so far as there is an American religion that is *the* American religion religion it is *his*—Baptist-Methodist evangelical Protestantism, the faith of the farm and the frontier; and he has fashioned a series of subtly ritualistic TV commercials that evoke fundamentally religious feelings without talking specifically about God. He talks about how hard he has always had to work. He walks across his peanut fields into the sunset, stoops down, and he tests the earth with his fingers, leans over the conveyor belt and runs peanuts through his hands as if he were Midas and these were his coins.

He knows we are profoundly embarrassed—though perhaps unconsciously—by our complicity in a whole series of crimes for which we share responsibility because of either our silence in the face of injustice, or our inability to grieve in real tragedy, or our outright support of immoral positions—the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King; the bloodthirsty bombings of Hanoi and Cambodia; Mylai; the killings at Kent State; Attica; the 41 American servicemen lost in "retaking the Mayaguez"; Watergate; and the humiliating collapse of Vietnam and the unspoken realization that those who died died in vain.

Perhaps, politically, Carter could heal the wounds of Vietnam. He supported it consistently, but now seems to have undergone a conversion. He preaches about how we "firebombed villages" killing "every man, woman and child in the village to save it," and calls

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the war fundamentally "racist." If elected he would immediately "pardon" all defectors and draft dodgers.

Ironically, although the "twice-born" Carter himself went through the traditional religious "conversion experience" following his defeat in a Georgia election in 1967, he does not offer the same experience to the nation. Perhaps he feels that only God's grace in its own time can bring a nonbeliever low enough so that this same grace can raise him up. Perhaps too he has simply been telling us half truths so that he can get elected: that *they*, not *we*, were responsible for Vietnam, Watergate and the CIA activities. It is a little like the forgiveness of sins without having to say you are sorry, the goodness bestowed on the people by their leader's smile and assurance rather than a new innocence earned by confronting the evil in ourselves and putting it into perspective. "It is hard for me," he said in a *New York Times* interview (May 21, 1976) "to explain the dichotomy which exists among the American people, which is certainly mirrored in my own feelings, about the war. I don't know how to rationalize it further."

Until the national leaders can "rationalize" it further, we will have to settle for CBS Radio reporter Marvin L. Kalb's commentary on April 29, 1976, on the anniversary of the last American leaving Vietnam in disgrace: "Strategic hamlets, pacification, Phoenix program, search and destroy, incursion, Christmas bombing, peace with honor, the Paris accords. It is as though no one wishes to be reminded, as though the nation needs several more years just to develop the strength to remember . . . Will any of the Democratic candidates pay their respects to this anniversary, will President Ford have a special word just to commemorate those Americans who died in that long and terrible war? Will anyone call for a Congressional investigation just to find out what went wrong, so the mistakes will not be repeated again? Or, in this respect, will this day be like the past 365, busy and boisterous, but essentially empty and silent?"

A Sense of Place

From the beginning there has been some discussion as to who should "own" the Bicentennial. As far back as the Kennedy administration Boston, Philadelphia and Washington each began to argue that it should be the focal point of the national celebration. The decision shifted around, was put off and changed. As a result, there is no focal point. No one event or place that will hold national attention—rather a series of happenings, each laden with its own conflicts and ambiguities. From Boston, the birthplace of liberty now at war over implementation of a busing plan to break down school segregation, J. Anthony Lukas wrote (*New York Times Magazine*, May 18, 1975): "But Bostonians' stake in their tumultuous past has been reinforced by their turbulent present. Not surprisingly, the mob violence protesting forced busing in South Boston, the sight of police on horseback clattering through the narrow streets, the placards, banners and elegies have stirred a tribal recollection of another battle over men's rights." Ironically, both sides in the violent busing dispute—white and black—see themselves as "victims of the same colonial oppression which beset Bostonians in the seventeen-seventies and claim to be fighting for the same control of their lives." Only the poet, 83-year-old Archibald MacLeish seems to have caught the agony of the nation summed up in that ancient town:

City of Man, Oh, City of the famous dead
where Otis spoke and Adams' heart was bred;
Mother of the great Republic—mother town
below these fantasies of glass that crowd our sky
and hatred like a whirling paper in a street
tears at itself where shame and hatred meet.
Show me, old friends, where in the darkness still
stands the great Republic on its hill!

There will, of course, be July 4th celebrations in Philadelphia, "the cradle of American independence," followed in August by the 41st International Eucharistic Congress. The Jesuit General, Rev. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., will appear, and so, possibly, will the Pope—but probably not. But ex-movie stars Loretta Young, Irene Dunne and Grace Kelly will represent American womanhood—ample evidence of our unflagging devotion to illusions. But Philadelphia has twice elected as mayor a racist whose very existence should be a national embarrassment; and it is hard to see how visiting national leaders or churchmen could not feel squeamish about associating with him or with his city.

Washington still has the smell of Watergate and the pardoned Nixon. It is here, as far as the public is concerned, that the great betrayal of the last decade took place. Even the impeachment ritual and Nixon's removal has not restored public confidence in "the system." For "the system" pardoned him too. And far too many Americans realize that the alleged peoples' victory over Nixon was part chance and part political suicide. If Nixon had not taped himself, if the tapes' existence had not been accidentally revealed, if the other mysteries in his character had not made him forget, fear or fail to destroy them, he would still be President. And even the impeachment process ran away from Nixon's real crimes—the Christmas bombing and the invasion of Cambodia—because they were public acts the guilt of which so many "good men" shared whether they would admit it or not.

Meanwhile Washington is renovating the center of its Union Station into a Bicentennial visitors' center. Now, half through the year, it is far from ready. Perhaps it will be done by Inauguration Day in 1977, when the so-called Bicentennial will be over, and per-

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haps we will have a president we can respect, who will do a little more to restore our confidence in our nation and ourselves.

But, to a great degree, this is an un-American hope. The essence of democracy, is self-confidence in the people, self-reliance, not a longing for a special Someone to come and save us. Perhaps one of our greatest mistakes in recent years has been to look to leaders to tell us who we are. Have I outgrown my childhood need for a Franklin D. Roosevelt? Is not the American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson *the* American philosopher and Henry David Thoreau the most consistently challenging American because both force us back into the basic point in ourselves where we share a spiritual but absolutely real union with God, with Nature and our fellow men. Perhaps if any American does take 200 seconds of silence on July 4th, he should spend some of it reading Emerson's "Self-Reliance": "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius." Thoreau entered his cabin on Walden pond on July 4th, 1845: ". . . to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life . . . to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and to be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion."

Perhaps now more than ever to be American is to get a feel of a place; an at-home-ness with the values the place preserves and conveys. I think I'll spend July 4th on the Hudson River, not up here but in New York Harbor, watching hundreds of great sailing ships now on their way from all over the world sail up the River —aiming toward Hyde Park—up as far as the George Washington Bridge . . . and then turn around and come back.

DOWN WITH THE PRIMARIES

WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS

Extremely costly, time-consuming and dependent on the mass media

This year, the Presidential election will be an anticlimax. The primaries have settled it in advance. Jimmy Carter, barely a national figure when the primaries began, has emerged as the de facto Democratic nominee and the safest bet to win the Presidency since the reelection of James Monroe. The primaries also finished George Wallace's career as a political bogeyman. And where Republican leaders, left to themselves, would have renominated President Ford with only a few dissenting votes, the primaries gave them a close race and the prospect of a bitter convention, politically ruinous whatever the outcome. Taken as a whole, the primary season may have effected a minor revolution in American politics.

Accolades to the wisdom of the Founders are in fashion this Bicentennial year, but the great institutions of a presidential election—primaries, political parties, national conventions and campaigns—are unmentioned in the Constitution. They developed as adaptations to a mass democracy which the Farmers would have detested and which the Constitution was designed to prevent. The apparatus of parties and primaries is an anomly in the Constitutional system. A primary is a contest within a private association. (Until the end of World War II, Southern Democratic parties were able to justify the "white primary" on the ground that primaries were matters of private concern.) Political parties, however, are evidently very "public" private associations, and this private contest is not only regulated but *conducted* by the state. Parties and primaries make a hash of the distinction between "public" and "private" spheres that is fundamental to American constitutionalism, and it is no surprise that public policy in relation to the nominating process should have been hesitant, pragmatic and unsystematic.

The Progressive movement, which popularized the Direct Primary, at least had a goal. Moved by a combination of middle-class individualism and a Protestant distrust of "intermediaries," Progressives intended the direct primary to destroy party organizations, an aim which it virtually achieved in states like California. At the national level, however, the movement faltered, and while primaries were an important *part* of the nominating process, they were only that. There were not many primaries, and even less delegates were bound by primary results. Primaries influenced decisions, but the

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decisions themselves were made by party leaders at national conventions.

The Democratic Convention of 1968 changed all that. The Chicago disaster led to the McGovern Commission reforms, and those reforms in turn have affected the Republicans. Party organizations had, in any case, been growing weaker over the years, afflicted by all the forces in American society making for estrangement, instability and limited loyalty. The new reforms have been enough to tip the balance; in 1972 and 1976, there has been a decisive shift in power from the conventions to the primaries and, more important, a radical decline in the influence of party organizations. Conventions in the future will act within the terms set *by* the primaries. This year, Hubert Humphrey hoped for a primary deadlock that would make his nomination possible and inevitable; he did not, as in 1968, hope for a convention verdict *at odds* with the primaries.

The rapid increase in the number of primaries, combined with the inability of party organizations to control local elections, has created a nominating process that is extremely costly, time-consuming and dependent on the mass media. And if 1976 is an example, the new system seems to annoy and frustrate an extraordinary range of candidates and voters.

At the simplest level, critics assert that there are too many primaries. The campaign becomes exhausting, and the problems are accentuated by the lunatic diversity of state election codes which dictate a different set of electoral tactics for almost every state. Voters as well as candidates sometimes suffer from these local idiosyncrasies: in New Jersey, the ballot was so confusing that delegates pledged to George Wallace—who had a favorable "line" on the ballot—nearly won Newark's Central Ward, which is overwhelmingly Black.

Modernity tends to simplify and centralize, displacing locality and variety, and it is no surprise that many candidates, headed by President Ford, have expressed support for some sort of national primary or, at least, a series of "regional" primaries held over a relatively short period. But administrative difficulties aside, such proposals would limit one of the undeniable advantages of the present system: the ability of a less-known candidate to build a national following gradually, concentrating limited resources on one campaign at a time. It took time and many contests for Eugene McCarthy in '68, George McGovern in '72 and Jimmy Carter this year to acquire national exposure and credibility. Pitted against better-financed, better-known candidates in a "once-and-for-all" contest, it seems unlikely that any of them would have emerged as serious, let alone as successful candidates. "Regional" primaries might be only marginally better; moreover, regional primaries might suggest that a candidate like Carter is a "Southern" candidate, obscuring his broad base of support in states and regions where he might not finish first.

The discussion of regional and national primaries, moreover, tends to obscure the central problems of primary voting. In the first place, it should be clear that the electorate in primary elections is peculiar. It is only a small fraction of all registered voters (in New Jersey, about 20-25 percent is common). But this does *not* mean that primary voters are restricted to the highly informed and the deeply committed: primary electorates emphasize the half-committed and the half-informed, a spectacular advantage for Governor Reagan this year, although he is hardly the only beneficiary. State laws, in fact, sometimes emphasize this. In Oregon, a conscientious citizen who registers early is bound by that early "declaration" of party; if the citizens calls himself "Independent," he cannot vote in a primary at all. But the citizen who shows up to register and vote on primary day can vote in any primary he chooses, a spectacular reward for bad citizenship which fortunately is not the rule.

It is even more important that it is extremely hard for voters to make sense out of voting in a primary election. For Republicans this year, the choice was relatively simple. If you adored Ford or Reagan, you voted for your passion; if you had mixed feelings, you made some choice about "the lesser of two evils," and it was clear that in voting for Reagan, you were

voting against Ford, and vice versa. But the more normal rule in primaries is that there will be *more* than two candidates, which enormously increases the difficulty of a rational vote. Consider the Democratic voter in New Hampshire: if he was a liberal, did he vote for the liberal candidate most likely to defeat Carter? Had New Hampshire liberals done so, Carter might easily have been defeated. But if he preferred Shriver to Udall, by voting for Udall, while he increased the chance of defeating Carter, he also added to the risk that Shriver would be forced out of the race. The moderate or conservative Democrat in New Hampshire who favored Jackson or Wallace (neither of whom was in the race), faced an even more serious problem. To vote for Carter would injure the chances of the candidate he favored; a vote against Carter, however, would require supporting a liberal, whose policies he opposed.

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There were too many candidates; at the same time, not all the candidates ran in all the primaries and some, like Humphrey, did not run at all. Voters were often frustrated, denied a chance to vote for a candidate they really favored. At the same time, the would-be rational voter, especially in the crucial early primaries, was forced to calculate the probable result of his vote on the *local* primary (a difficult enough task where there were many candidates) and, at the same time, the impact of the local result on *future* primaries. These are complex calculations, often contradictory. But voters *tried* to make those calculations, which partly explains the obsessive concern of the mass media with predictions, expectations and speculations about probable and possible results and impacts, and their comparative lack of concern with discussion of the "issues."

Voters in the complex world of primary elections are unusually dependent on the media, and the media are more than usually inadequate. In the first place, the discussion of issues *within* a party rarely involves sharp distinctions and confrontations. Differences of opinion are subtle, often matters of affect as much as intellect, and not well suited to presentation in a minute and half "spot" on TV news.

And the media do not serve the electorate much better when they interpret the "meaning" of primaries, especially given the complexities of primary voting. I tend to agree with the quasi-official view that in 1976, voters preferred "outsiders" and were disenchanted with Washington. But even on the Republican side, where this seems most evident (and where voters have been hating Washington ever since 1933), it is hard to decide how much is due to President Ford's defects as a campaigner. And among Democrats, it is clear to me that Jimmy Carter would *not* have defeated the Washington "establishment." He did eliminate Senator Jackson, a campaigner almost as inept as the President, though he also managed to lose to Jackson twice. But Carter surely would *not* have defeated Humphrey in the crucial Pennsylvania primary; Humphrey probably would have won in most industrial states, and Ted Kennedy probably would have defeated Carter almost everywhere outside the South. Yet Kennedy and Humphrey are symbols of the Washington liberal establishment, which makes it difficult to say what the voters wanted.

All of these problems reflect the *defect of the direct primary itself* when dealing with situations where more than two candidates are in contention. The direct primary, like the Initiative and Referendum, is successful where questions can be formulated in "Yes" or "No" terms. It does not work where there are third alternates and second choices. There, I need to do more than register a vote. I need to discuss, deliberate, make clear my own preferences and formulate alternative strategies. If I prefer Jackson among the announced candidates, it may be vital that I like Humphrey better, that I would rather have Carter than Frank Church, and so on.

Proposals for national and regional primaries approach the voter's difficulty by attempting to reduce the importance of the impact of his vote on the future. They seek to simplify the voter's choice, not to increase his effectiveness in dealing with broad alternatives. And both national and regional primaries increase the significance of the mass media, already hopelessly part of the problem.

It seems to me that a convention system, firmly based on the grass roots, offers more genuine democracy and participation of higher quality than any direct primaries can ever do. With proper guarantees of easy access at the precinct or sub-precinct level, an ascending series of local meetings culminating in a state convention (Iowa is something of a model here) offers a number of small, face-to-face meetings in which genuine deliberation is possible. It need not exclude anyone, though in practice systems of this sort tend to give greater weight to highly committed voters. "Outsider" candidates seem to do as well with such systems as they do at present; McGovern did well in convention states in '72, and Carter ran well in the "first round" in Iowa long before his primary victories. In fact, candidates without much money are even *less* excluded by a system based on precinct conventions, since such a system tends to decrease the power of the mass media and to emphasize commitment, organization and personal contact.

That sort of "indirect primary" is subject to all the personal pressures and irrationalities that the Progressives feared; appeals to loyalty and love, to the patriotism of neighborhood and the "spirit of faction" would almost certainly be strong. The Progressives feared "intermediaries" because they distrusted groups and interpersonal bonds; breaking that chain of intermediaries, they gave us a "direct" system in which candidates confront multitudes, with the only link provided by the flat images of the mass media, colored by the mercenaries of public relations firms. Jimmy Carter, as David Broder writes, "began by saying he was seeking an intimate, personal relationship with the the voters" and "ended his campaign by deciding the best way to reach them was to buy five minutes of simultaneous time on all three networks."

Media, money, maddening complexity: despite it all, the voters struggled this year to make sense out of it all, and to perform their office as electors with some concern for the public good. It is a sort of testimonial for democracy that they attempted the impossible task. And it may not be wholly hopeless to suggest that we give voters a primary system cut to human scale, slow-moving, wordy and indirect, but for all its faults, a vital part of any polity devoted to the consent of the governed.

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JIMMY CARTER'S RELIGION

JAMES T. BAKER

The man who could be the nation's third Baptist President

As a practicing if somewhat jaded Southern Baptist, I find the recent, tardy hand-wringing concern of the Max Lerners about Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter's salvationist Southern Baptist religion just a bit amusing.

As a professional student of American religion—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—I find the concern perfectly understandable and, given certain widespread assumptions and a couple of historical precedents, entirely justifiable.

Jimmy Carter, assuming his popularity holds and he is nominated and elected, would be our third Baptist President. Only Warren Harding and Harry Truman before him could claim that perhaps dubious distinction. Only Truman, whose family had moved to Missouri from Mississippi, was a Southern Baptist, and Harry never made much of his affiliation. Carter would then be the first President to be both a southern and a Baptist, a true "born again" Southern Baptist, and the first to permit it to be made a public, political issue.

He is therefore essentially a new phenomenon in American politics. Though there have been only one Roman Catholic and no Jewish Presidents (thus thirty-seven Protestants) the peanut farmer from Georgia would be the first to say publicly that he has been "saved." He is even now the first serious contender with anything like a well-developed "salvationist" theology since William Jennings Bryan; and with it, just like Bryan, he attracts legions of fellow redeemed travellers while turning off an influential handful of doubting sophisticates.

Despite the great American love affair with Billy Graham, and the fact that most Americans neither know nor care what a potential President believes in, there are some rather thoughtful people who feel it's just a tad risky to have an American President who has been "saved by grace through the blood of the Lamb." There has been little concern for Udall's former Mormonism or Ford's misguided, Nixon-pardoning Episcopalianism or Jerry Brown's strange Zen Catholicism. Maybe it's because no one gave any of them a chance to win. Or maybe it's because they have not had the audacity to claim a personal experience with God. Even Richard Nixon, perhaps the most overtly pious candidate in our history, never claimed to be saved.

Carter, unlike the others, may be our next President; and he speaks openly, voluntarily of his salvation. The book he wrote about it, called *Why Not the Best?* (that's Jesus Christ, not Jimmy Carter), was just released by the Southern Baptist Broadman Press and is a Bantam paperback. On "The Bill Moyers Journal" for P.B.S. he talked of his vital faith for a full hour. Significantly but not surprisingly, he told Moyers (a fellow Southern Baptist, also presumably saved but according to a lot of southern Baptists "backslidden" up there in New York) that his favorite hymn is the old Baptist and new pop folk ballad *Amazing Grace*:

> Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
> that saved a wretch like me.
> I once was lost, but now I'm found,
> was blind but now I see.

Carter's autobiography tells of a dissatisfied graduate of Annapolis and nuclear submarine commander who resigned his commission to go home to his peanut plantation and the Georgia state legislature—who lost a race for Governor in the racial confusion of 1966—who at the age of forty-one, discouraged by his failure, unfulfilled by the accumulation of wealth, a loosely committed but unenthusiastic Baptist church member since before his eleventh birthday, reached his psychological and spiritual nadir. It was then that his sister Ruth, herself a victim of severe depression before spending three months alone in a backwoods cabin and then finding "pentecostal salvation," took him for a long walk. She described her own redemptive experience—mystical, healing—in which she, also a church member since childhood, had met Jesus and found peace and fulfillment. (Ruth Carter Stapleton is now an interdenominational faith healer.) She told Brother Jimmy that he would find joy only when Jesus was more important to him than politics. They prayed. Jimmy's burden was lifted. "Putting Jesus first," he went on to be Governor of Georgia and run for President.

"Salvation" is a much more common experience among contemporary Americans than many people, even professional theologians, seem to think. It tends to occur

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most regularly among those trained by salvationist churches to expect it. And it is most common in those desperately seaching for personal recognition, fullfillment, and security: children seeking to earn the mature world's respect, sexually ripening adolescents, runaway teenagers, menopausic men and women, and to certain people at each of these stages. But all in all it's a perfectly natural experience that answers perfectly normal needs. It is calling upon God and believing he responds, or better, it is being called by God and responding. Only a Charles Colson, a former Nixon aid who was conveniently "saved" after the scandal broke (*Born Again*, his book), could cheapen it or make it seem the least bit suspicious.

As a stunning act of God at a specific time in a person's life, salvation is often stereotyped as a low-church Protestant phenomenon, as a cultic characteristic of Methodists and their unacknowledged Holiness stepchildren, or "Wesleyan" Baptists and Presbyterians. It is believed by many alien, perhaps even an ideological opponent, to what is called salvation in Roman Catholic and other high-church liturgical fellowships.

But this is not really the case. In her *Drama of Salvation*, for example, the Catholic writer Rosemary Haughton calls this stereotype to account. She says that this false dichotomy was created during the Reformation and its aftermath by theologians looking for differences to exploit. While Protestants identified salvation as an act of God, a sudden, often unexpected gift, an "event" that sets a person permanently on the road to heaven, Catholics defined it as the final reward at death for a life of virtue, or at least of dying in sacramental grace. Neither side gave an inch. Neither side admitted the least bit of truth in the other's definition. It was not an age for tolerance. But, as Ms. Haughton points out, Catholicism has always believed in and taught "Protestant" salvation too. It may not be quite as common. It may not happen to all. It may therefore be unusual. But it is a natural act of God. It is desirable. It makes saints. It attracts millions to Lourdes and Fatima. Catholics are sometimes "saved" too.

Jimmy Carter is of course a Southern Baptist, a specific kind of saved person. Southern Baptists are the southern branch of the American Baptist denomination descended from a seventeenth century British nonconformist sect which originally had little distinctive theology except that they required "adult" participation in the sacraments. Only adults could be baptized (they early came to believe immersion to be the only true form of baptism) and actively participate in ecclesial celebrations because for them Christianity was a faith of the consciously aware. For their other theological principles, especially concerning salvation, the English, American and Southern Baptists looked to their closest allies, the Calvinists and Wesleyans. From Calvin's devout children they took their belief in a God who initiates saving relations with men; from Wesley's tireless workers they took the idea that He comes with his offer to all who patiently wait for his inevitable knock at the heart's door.

So for Carter's people and for Carter, salvation has for three centuries been identified as a freely and inevitably offered gift of God. It is given to all who agree to let Him come in. It comes through "conviction" at hearing the Word preached. It is requisite for church membership.

It is usually accompanied by great emotion. When it comes to an older person, it is supposed to cause great changes in lifestyle. These modern days it most often first comes to the young—younger and younger it seems as in our society the young mature ever faster—and when it does, the child can be baptized and enjoy the privileges of full adult church membership.

When it occurs in childhood, it is often followed in later years by one or more further, usually much deeper experiences which can be interpreted two ways: (1) as a sign the person was not in fact "saved" before, in which case there is often a second or "true" baptism;

(2) as a return to or deepening of faith, in which case the person makes a public rededication of life to Christ and his church.

Salvation, especially the second or later experience, *can* lead—though Southern Baptists generally discourage it as Pentecostal—to "signs of the spirit" such as faith healing and speaking in unknown tongues. With Ruth Carter Stapleton this seems to have happened. With Jimmy it didn't, and probably just as well for his political career.

Carter's "salvation experience" seems about as healthy as possible. His is the kind enlightened Southern Baptist ministers encourage. It has given him a certain inner peace without neutralizing his ambition. He believes "God wants me to be the best politician I can possibly be." It has made him something of a social reformer, though not verbally radical enough to alienate his southern constituency, a crypto-liberal who learned long before Presidential politics to fuzz public statements while secretly going on with progressive programs. It has turned his attention to theologians like Tillich, Barth and Niebuhr. He is fond of quoting the latter's definition of the purpose of government: to establish justice in a sinful world. Jimmy Carter is in short the very

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best that Southern Baptist religion and culture can offer.

Which is not to say there is some sinister Southern Baptist salvationist plot to elect Jimmy Carter President any more than there was in John Kennedy's candidacy a Papist plot to put a Catholic on top. Despite the Broadman biography and the obvious support of a lot of Baptist ministers (remember the nuns pouring out to vote for J.F.K.?) there is not to my knowledge a concerted Southern Baptist effort to put Carter in the White House, no plan to create a cabinet-level, salvationist Clergy General, no dream of making liturgicals sit at the rear of the bus. It there were, I feel sure that even the Republican Billy Graham would be on the bandwagon.

Carter is not the Baptist candidate, and he should not be denied the Presidency because he is saved any more than another candidate because he goes to confession or another because he wears a yamulka to services. Yet his candidacy, because he has been willing to testify to his faith by permitting his salvation to become an issue, does raise some possibly troubling questions.

Since he has been a Southern Baptist all his life, since his latter-day salvation experience probably drove deeper the values of early conservative social mores, could he bring to the Oval Office bizarre programs for a new Prohibitionism, an end to legal divorce, a censorship of what Baptists consider pornography? Would purity

POLITICS & ABORTION

GERARD A. BRANDMEYER

One of the major surprises of this presidential campaign was the early success of the "pro-life" movement in maneuvering abortion policy into the foreground as *the* burning issue which would make or break any candidate. At least that seemed to be the shape of things in January and February according to the media messages from Iowa and New Hampshire. Yet by late-spring the burning issue had all but vanished, occasionally to be recalled whenever Cronkite, Reasoner, or Chancellor tally the latest delegate count. The presidential primaries have established Ellen McCormack, the right-to-life advocate, as a marginally credible candidate by virtue of the few delegates she managed to earn. Mrs. McCormack is the first serious amateur candidate for a major party nomination in memory. Never mind that without a subsidy from federal matching funds, she might not have been able to afford that blunt fetus-laden media campaign. The fact is that her stand on behalf of the anti-abortion cause means that a truly parochial, one-issue advocate can draw coveted media attention all the way to Madison Square Garden where both her name and her cause are expected to be placed before the Democratic convention.

Yet the primary results suggest that the decision to run Ellen McCormack was a serious tactical mistake for the right-to-life movement. To understand why, consider abortion as a "status politics" issue. Political sociologists define status politics issues as those in which competing status groups face off in bitter struggles over the moral and the immoral, the sacred and the profane, or the ugly and the beautiful. Unlike economic (class) politics, status politics is uncompromising. Rational and tolerant give-and-take yields to immoderate and irreconcilable fervor. Often, as with the abortion issue, victory is mostly symbolic. There is no denying that even amending the Constitution would at most serve to restore pre-1973 conditions for obtaining an abortion. From a right-to-life perspective, all this would achieve is murder on a somewhat lessened scale. If abortion cannot be eliminated, then the pro-life movement is limited to the symbolic objective of having Law and Public Policy validate and uphold the personal standards of those who feel that their moral station demands expression through this movement.

Debate between the abortion adversaries is invariably brutish, mean, and short, with neither side appreciating the moral and metaphysical complexities which trouble the other. Any movement that is fortified by certainty and free of doubt, communicating solely within its isolated circle of true believers, is prone to overestimate its own strength. On the face of it, a one-issue, anti-abortion candidacy was a rash gamble, linked to these two implicit and fragile premises: (1) Invariably, lots of alienated voters are eager to send the political establishment a message in primary elections, and (2) heavily Catholic and tradition-bound New England, the site of the first three primaries, would be fertile ground for rallying such voters around the abortion issue.

The gamble was rash because, unless Mrs. McCormack was successful, her cause would be set back just when it seemed to be gaining ground. Some figure, let us say 10 to 15 per cent of the vote in each of the three states, should have been the minimum target. Any qualified pollster could

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of heart translate into using the big stick to enforce Baptist social purity?

Would he bring from his training in BYPU (Baptist Young People's Union) a missionary zeal that might lead him, as Eric Goldman believes similar training led Lyndon Johnson, to try to "save" his little brown, black and yellow brothers all over the globe from a fate worse than death? Would there be other Vietnams?

Since he believes God speaks directly to him, since in addition he tends to be a loner and rarely lets his aides sway his thinking, would he ever take a humanly illogical step, one that might risk war, because God told him to? Would he take his J.C. initials too seriously? Would we have with Jimmy Carter what Malcolm Boyd warns will be a "messianic" Presidency?

The answer to the first question is probably not. There were no signs of puritanism in his limited exercise of power as Governor of Georgia. He showed in fact a liberal tolerance for pluralism. He might in armchair interviews suggest some seemingly old-fashioned prescriptions for the society's problems, but he has too common a need for power and popularity to threaten his career with acts that might diminish either one.

As to "missionary" involvement in foreign affairs, it is a possibility, but more I think because Carter is a former military officer than because he is a graduate of BYPU. Such dangers are no greater with him than with any other adult male, and they are perhaps greater with a Democrat than with a Republican only because a cooperative Congress is now necessary to mobilize the troops. We have only Carter's promise of restraint as we have only promises from all the others.

The last question, that of a messianic complex, sounds hardest but is in fact easiest to answer. Carter is really a very normal Southern Baptist. Like so many of the rest of us, he never lets his faith interfere with practical matters. He keeps the typical Southern Baptist "English walnut" distinction between what he believes and what he does.

A truly radical salvationist would never have been elected Governor or come so far toward being elected President. What is most disturbing about Jimmy Carter is not that he is unlike but that he is too much like the pragmatic, secular, compromising, greedy LBJ and RMN.

Yet he is obviously potentially a much better man than either Johnson or Nixon. His salvation, if he is telling the truth, seems in certain important ways to have touched his personal life. He claims it has made him care more for people, not a bad sign in a Presidential candidate. Some people even find fault with this and predict he will be too "soft" to be an effective President; but then we haven't done all that well with "tough" Presidents over the last few terms, have we? Perhaps a President who can "feel" warmth flowing to and from him as he shakes hands with voters is not such a bad bet.

Salvation—for Southern Baptists perhaps roughly parallel to veneration of the Virgin for Catholics—can turn a person inward to spiritual self-indulgence and disregard for social responsibilities. But it can and often does release a flow of love for others. It may well be responsible for the little good we Southern Baptists have done in the world.

Carter once voted, virtually alone, to integrate his local church in Plains, not the most popular thing to do in the Georgia of the 60's. He said he did it to show to his fellow man the same love God had shown him. Not a bad reason. What does it matter where a national leader got his social concern, in catechism class, a university classroom, or a Baptist revival meeting, so long as it's there?

have attested to the low probability of achieving such a goal. (Recall that according to the *CBS-New York Times* poll taken in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, the abortion question did not rank among the five most salient issues even with Catholic voters.) Instead, Mrs. McCormack plunged in, apparently unaware of the risk.

That risk is now reality. In the three New England primaries, Ellen McCormack only approached a respectable showing once, in the non-binding and lightly reported Vermont primary where she drew 9.4 per cent which still left her a weak last. So in New England, where she needed to do well, the anti-abortion candidate was competitive only with Milton Shapp, Birch Bayh and "no preference." These returns confirmed for both the politicians and the press corps what they had believed all along, but had begun to doubt last winter in the wake of zealous lobbying pressure from the pro-life movement. Abortion represents legalized murder in the minds of many Americans, with roughly 38 to 45 per cent approving a Constitutional amendment banning abortion according to recent Harris and Gallup polls. Nevertheless, in a two-party political culture, where victory goes to the candidate who controls the middle ground so abhorrent to the adversaries in a status politics dispute, the vast majority of voters will not make an elective choice based on any single issue.

To the politicians this means that the ordinary rules of the game are intact. There is no need to say, without qualification, yes or no to abortion. That is, with subtle and delicate deference to the moral sensibilities of each side, this issue too can be straddled. Just when the right-to-life movement was gaining momentum and the candidates were beginning to wonder if this were not the dreaded *unequivocal* issue, along came Ellen McCormack so graciously to put them at their ease.

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THE ALL-TIME DAY STORY

PRESS

Of all the onerous chores young reporters are given to do, the Day story is worst. Obituaries are always easy to write, and sometimes interesting, and police stories are flavored with violence, greed and the seedy appeal of the lower depths. In a limited dose—say a year or so—police reporting will give you a good idea of the chaos from which societies grow, and to which they sometimes return. By the end of the year, however, you are no longer quite so noticing. You have probably ceased to watch and are beginning to join the nightly poker game in the police shack. You cease to surprise yourself by feeling instinctive disappointment when car accidents are not fatal. You begin to like eating dinner at one in the morning, after the paper has gone to bed, and like waking up at noon on hot summer mornings, and sometimes forget to brush your teeth before the first cigarette of the day.

It is common to begin such a year of police reporting with an instinctive sympathy for the criminal, partly because they have had no advantages (so unlike yourself), and partly because they choose to live defiantly, and by their wits. Along about the middle of the year your sympathy switches to the policeman, after you have begun to see that criminals—or at least those you are running across—are not lone wolves, crafty and proud, but mad dogs.

In New Haven, once, nearly fifteen years ago, I saw a policeman lead in a young black man with a torn shirt and his hands cuffed behind his back. They emptied his pockets, typed up a property list, and then uncuffed him so he could sign the form. As soon as his hands were free he swung on the cop who had brought him in. The cop went back against a wall and his cheek bone turned red. Some other cops got the young black man under control and handcuffed him again, but not before he bit one of them in the hand. After that the desk sergeant signed the property form. I suppose that was an infraction of the law.

The young black man was then taken down a corridor to the lockup. As soon as the cell door clanked shut he commenced to yell. He wanted a lawyer, he wanted a phone call, he wanted a drink of water, he wanted the cops to know what he thought of them. The door to the lockup was closed but the prisoner only yelled louder. He yelled for twenty minutes. It was nearly midnight and the other prisoners shouted for him to shut the hell up. He didn't. After half an hour or so the cop who had brought him in went back out to the lockup, billy club in hand. He closed the door behind him. There was a shout or two, some ugly thumps, and then silence. At the time, I didn't blame the cop one bit.

But after a year or so you cease to sympathize with anyone. You decide—not consciously, after considering the good arguments on the one hand, as opposed to the excellent counter-arguments on the other hand; but unconsciously, perhaps while walking home alone at night, or while sleeping too late in the groggy heat of summer mornings—that this eternal war has nothing to do with you. By that time you have slipped out of phase with ordinary life, and live in the eddies of walk-up flats and all-night restaurants and weekends which come in the middle of the week. During the first year you learn a lot, more than you would in another twenty doing the same thing, but after that year you had better move on to another beat, or get out of newspaper reporting altogether.

But I started out to talk about Day stories. Police stories wear you down, or did me, and obituaries are too perfunctory to engage you (with the occasional exception of some old fellow who went to the Klondike in 1890), and weather stories are as interesting as the weather, fine in tornado country or hurricane season, prosaic otherwise, but Day stories are never anything but hollow and arbitrary.

This is a Day story: "Downtown stores, the Whalley Avenue Elementary School marching band, and the New Haven Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, among other area groups, will celebrate George Washington's 230th birthday today with a cherry pie sale, a cherry tree pageant and march-past, and a commemorative reading of Parson Weems' hagiography of the nation's first President." The city editor will strike hagiography.

Day stories are hard to write. The lead seems all but impossible, not because there is nothing left to say about George Washington—there is probably plenty—but because the George Washington Birthday story is supposed to be a news story but there is almost certainly nothing newsworthy about the day itself. It is hollow because the holiday is perfunctory, and it is arbitrary because you have got to make something out of next to nothing and write a story anyway. Even worse is the possibility that a stroke of genius will somehow enable you to write a *good* Day story, thereby guaranteeing your editor will assign you the task of writing all subsequent day stories—Easter, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Hallowe'en, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, St. Valentine's Day, and thus on around to George Washington *again*. Sisyphus springs to mind.

Whenever I had to write Day stories I used to think of history professors who would begin a course by say-

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ing that events are fluid in this world, dates don't matter, history is not cheese to be neatly sliced by centuries. The Ancient World did not end with the sack of Rome in 456, the Renaissance did not begin with Dante, the lights of Europe did not go out in August, 1914, but had been flickering dim for years, and are perhaps flickering still. The American Revolution did not begin in April, 1775, and the nation was not born on July 4, 1776. It is hard to fault such a subtle and mature view of the historical process, but it does not take into account the exigencies of journalism, and when July 4, 1976 rolls around, newspapers all over America are going to publish Day stories, and I am sure reporters are worrying right now what in God's name they are going to *say* in them.

It's a daunting prospect. The Bicentennial is the Day story of all time (at least until New Year's Day 2000, which is too awful to contemplate), a challenge which cannot be ducked, but how is one to do justice to the passage of two centuries of (almost) steady growth with no single overriding theme which does not have as many critics as champions? Almost anything you say will provoke an argument, and if it doesn't, it's too bland to bother saying. I have the deepest sympathy for those in the front lines, waiting to go over the top, not only the apprentices who are going to write the Basic Day story listing all the picnics, parades and speeches, but the leathery champions like James Reston and David Broder and Joseph Kraft and all their hundreds of colleagues. They are worrying the problem right now, trying to think of the one true thing to say about the first two hundred years of the United States of America. I expect they are sleepless at night, irritable with their children, fired by a hundred sudden enthusiasms, then tormented by doubts. God forbid they should be like those carpers who say the poor are still with us and the washing machines aren't built to last, but they mustn't overlook America's darker side either. Vietnam, the $100 billion defense budget and COINTELPRO are nothing to celebrate. It's a thin line the Day storymen have got to walk, and there are going to be plenty of witnesses for those who lose their footing and plunge off into the muck on one side, or the treacle on the other.

Not long ago I read E. M. Forster's essay, "Notes on the English Character," and was struck by two things: the fact that the English did indeed have a character, and that Forster had a pretty good idea what it was. Naturally I began to wonder if Americans had a character too. As long ago as 1782 Crevecoeur asked "Who is this American, this new man?" and some sort of answer ought to be possible after nearly two hundred years. Of course we are a people of various strains, not all of them on good terms, some of them not even on speaking terms, and new groups are signing in all the time. The most recent are half a million Cubans and no one knows how many Puerto Ricans, but they, like earlier groups, tend to collect in defensive stockades—Miami in the one instance, New York in the other. They have not yet deeply penetrated the rest of the country, where the "Americans" live. What is their character? What sort of people have they become in two hundred years? Are they slit-eyed Reagan voters, who cheer when the former California governor says there will be no *limited* wars while he is President? Would they side with Udall, if only his dogged progressivism had a chance? Are they lowering their sights with Brown, or yearning to trust Carter?

You've got me. No wonder Reston is working so hard on this column. It's impossible to guess what he or his colleagues are going to find to say, except, perhaps, in one respect. If history is any guide—and ten thousand Fourth of July and Christmas columns are all but unanimous on this point—then Reston and the rest are going to issue a pardon. They will have their reservations and their concerns for the future, as who doesn't, but in the end they are going to forgive us.

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote somewhere—I have forgotten where—that World War I ended the American childhood; it used up all our idealism; we would never be innocent again. The event was so terrible, the reasons for it so shallow and mendacious, the result so bitter that we would never get over the shock of disillusion. When you consider what had happened Fitzgerald's remark makes eminent good sense, but he failed to take into account the capacity of Americans for regaining their innocence after they have lost it. I am reminded of the turn-of-the-century sporting house ladies who became virgins again after they retired. I don't know how it was done, but there is nothing to be gained by doubting their sincerity.

Like them we have lost our innocence a thousand times—when we counted Negroes as two-fifths of a man in our Constitution, when we killed all of the buffalo and most of the Indians, when we cut down all the trees, and paid children a dollar a week to work in the mines, and deported thousands of radicals after WW I, and interned the Japanese in WW II, and hounded the pinkos out of academe, and fought a popular insurrection in Vietnam with Free Fire Zones. Everybody has his own list, but there isn't a crime on it—with the possible exception only of the most recent, whose turn is coming—which has not been blotted out from all but scholars' memories with a general pardon.

The most terrible things can happen in the course of a year. We can learn that the government has lied to us, that the CIA tried to poison Lumumba, that babies were shot right along with the adults at Mylai, that Nixon cheated on his income taxes (imagine!), but we can be sure all the same that when Christmas arrives, Reston and his colleagues are going to issue the annual Christmas pardon. We meet the excesses of

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each new era with innocence intact. If it gets beaten down over a time, when the era is over a general pardon will be issued, and our innocence will be fluffed up again, like a pillow. We turn over a new leaf, and start out fresh, and can be as shocked at the hundredth crime, as we were at the first.

Perhaps this, then, is one of the things which make up the irreducible American character, this ability to regain our innocence, and repeatedly fight the same battle, against the same enemies, in the name of the same ideals. But even so it always makes me a little mad to see Reston handing out his pardons, talking about the soaring American spirit and forgetting so quickly all the people who got pummeled along the way. Doesn't anything touch him? Can't he call anything by its right name? Is there never a year so bad that even he feels it proper to end it with an indictment, instead of a pardon?

It makes my teeth grate to think of the general amnesty he's going to declare in his Bicentennial Day story. I'll growl when I read it, but the truth is I'll probably be in a pardoning mood myself, and Reston will get one too. This isn't just sentimentality—although it's that too—and it isn't a short memory, and it certainly isn't a cosy feeling that everything was some sort of mistake. No, it's the fact that, pushed to it, I think Reston has got the right idea. He understands what a Day story is. When the time comes to rise and deliver a wedding toast, or a funeral eulogy, or only to wish someone a happy birthday, there is but one thing to do: put the best construction on the facts that you can.

THOMAS POWERS

BREAKING THROUGH

THE SCREEN

Whenever he makes a movie Arthur Penn talks about something he calls its "dramatic profile," by which he means the way structure reveals character in the film. A quick glance at Penn's filmography shows most of the titles in it—*The Left-Handed Gun, The Miracle Worker, Mickey One, Bonnie and Clyde, Little Big Man*—refer to characters. Perhaps because he had a background in theater, Penn has always been interested in characterization above all else. When he invents a scene or composes a shot, what matters to him is not how it advances the plot or explains cause and effect, but how it discloses character. It is the consistency of personalities, rather than events, that Penn aims for.

In Penn's new Western, *The Missouri Breaks,* this "dramatic profile" is the parallel structure of scenes that I was describing in the last issue. Penn builds up our sense of the antagonism between the two main characters, cattle rustler Tom Logan (Jack Nicholson) and "regulator" Lee Clayton (Marlon Brando), by showing them in similar, though unrelated scenes and circumstances. An ultimate clash between them that only one will survive seems inevitable not so much because one man has been baiting the other and spoiling for a fight, but just because they are men of such different temperament. The great problem Penn has set for himself is that that ultimate clash must occur. This is, after all, a Western, and it has to lead to a showdown. The parallel lines have to be made to converge somehow. Plot and character have to meet. A climactic scene has to be created which preserves and respects the oppositeness of these two men, and yet resolves the opposition between them in a single action appropriate to both.

This seems to me to be accomplished, as I was also saying in the last issue, by that peculiar scene where Logan murders Clayton. When Logan cuts Clayton's throat without either Clayton or us realizing at first that he has done so, the scene preserves that want of flamboyance and bravado which is Logan's nature. But at the same time, the scene gives Clayton an appropriate death too. What we have come to understand about Clayton is that he is not there in a sense. Where Logan is not given to gestures of any kind, Clayton is given to gestures that are all gratuitous and rhetorical. His emotions and even at times his rather corpulent body seem to be evanescent, immaterial, non-existent. And in this regard the understated, almost unstated way in which he dies is as appropriate to him as it is to his killer.

What the character portrait of Clayton finally goes to show is why he is suited to the work he does—why he is a "regulator." Aloof and absent in every other way, he is also absent when he does his killing. He kills all the members of Logan's gang from a distance when they are helpless or even unaware that he is there. His favorite weapon is a long-barreled rifle with which he can hit a victim he can only sight through binoculars, and it is this detachment from his violence that Logan hates in him.

All this is to say, once again, that formally Penn's film works very well. It is self-contained. Its action implies the motivation which explains that action. As soon as the discussion passes beyond Clayton's character to his vocation, however, we are taking into account another aspect of the film, besides the formal one, which is its generic aspect as a Western. That is to say, a man of Clayton's disposition and amorality might exist in any age or any drama, but being a "regulator" makes him a uniquely frontier character. As a Western, of course, Penn's film is not self-contained and merely self-referring. It is a reaction to years and years of other directors' films in which the conventions and traditions of the Western have been defined.

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There are really two traditions of the Western, two different genres almost. The first, which might be called the insider's tradition, consists of films made by directors who do a lot of Westerns, get their reputations from their Westerns, or think of themselves primarily as makers of Westerns. Among these would be John Ford, Anthony Mann and Sam Peckinpah. The other tradition, the outsider's, is made up of films by directors who work only occasionally in the Western and who either import the influence of other genres into the Western or exploit in some dramatic way changes already going on gradually in the Wesetrns of the insiders. In this group would be George Stevens, Fred Zinneman, and, I think, Arthur Penn. Either tradition may influence the other. When Ford made *Stagecoach* in 1939, he revived for everybody a genre that had been dead since the coming of sound. In the early fifties when Zinneman made *High Noon* and Stevens made *Shane*, the Western in general again turned a corner. Though Mann and Ford went on working by their own lights as always, *High Noon*, *Shane* and the "adult" Western cleared the way for Peckinpah's work ten years later.

The Missouri Breaks is perhaps another bid at originality in the Western, another of these periodic attempts to break new ground. Certainly Penn fancies himself the kind of marauder who can come in from outside and shake up a genre, as he proved with *Bonnie and Clyde*. *Stagecoach* went beyond the pure-hearted heroes of the silent Western by suggesting that the bad guys—the prostitute, outlaw and drunken doctor—might actually turn out to be the good guys. *Shane* and *High Noon* went further by suggesting that the good guy has to be gotten rid of in the end too. The trend has been away from gunfighters who are righteous and heroic toward those who are tragic and self-defeating. Having run the entire moral gamut, it seemed that at last, in the slow-motion sequences of Peckinpah or in the films of Clint Eastwood and Sergio Leone, the violence in the Western might become a purely aesthetic event—a work of visual beauty without any moral content at all.

But clearly Penn's film is an effort to find yet another moral alternative for the Western. In Penn's version what lies beyond the showdown—beyond the duel in the street at high noon or the gunfight at the OK corral—is murder by stealth. Moreover, where the showdown has lost all moral significance, this murder by stealth, the slitting of Clayton's throat, comes to us as a kind of moral affirmation. It is precisely because it is a murder by stealth that Logan's killing of Clayton is acceptable to us. That he doesn't make a contest and a grand show out of killing Clayton proves to us that Logan doesn't enjoy the killing. It proves that it is an act undertaken only for survival and out of necessity, an act in which Logan deserves no condemnation because he takes no pleasure.

As this is obviously a difficult moral position to maintain, it is not surprising that the climactic scene to which it leads is such a contorted one. To see how greatly Penn's Tom Logan complicates the morality play in the Western, consider how he advances upon Stevens' *Shane*, another outsider's classic to which *The Missouri Breaks* seems to invite comparison. Like *The Missouri Breaks*, Shane is the story of a feud between a small-time operator and a cattle baron who has hired a gunslinger. The great difference, though, is that the small-timer in *Shane* has a gunslinger on his side too. To help out the rube sodbuster played by Van Heflin, Stevens supplied the modest, plain-spoken but deadly gunfighter played by Alan Ladd. In *The Missouri Breaks* these two characters become just one character, Logan, who has the stylelessness of Heflin but the capacity of Ladd. This is why the moral knots get so much more tangled in Penn's film. He can't send away one character and keep the other at the end as Stevens could.

Human experience in Penn's film seems finally to conform to the very landscape where the film is set. The breaks of the Missouri River are an area of dry declivities, an area where the prairie floor just falls away suddenly like Clayton's life. It seems a futile landscape, this riverbed with no river in it, but learning to navigate here is largely what Penn's film is about. It is out of such a landscape that a character like Tom Logan is bred. Whether either the character or the landscape will take hold with other directors of the Western is a good question.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

THOMAS REITER

SNOW

We've crossed the snow laid over
on Quail Hollow Creek and come
to a field that's the afterimage
of sun on a wide pool. Along the bank
a hollow stump
takes its deepest breath in years,
the highest blackberry canes
are hunchbacks,
and pods of flowering ground cherry hang
like airless balloons. Bend close:
flakes link and overhang
a wild asparagus fern
till it drifts down like a water-strider
mooring the flow to its reflection.
This field has lost its way,
each bush and weed a sign
that has packed its directions into roots.
Say nothing. Snow is the term
this day goes under.

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JEWEL WITHOUT PRICE

SAUL MALOFF

"Friendly witnesses," as informers were once strangely called, did not write memoirs—Whittaker Chambers excepted, and a small number of others, bent on striking the hot iron of expiation of self-martyrdom or justification; informers do not write memoirs; their work done they tend to vanish into some black hole, as if they had never been. A loathing of informers runs very deep in all but the truly perverse and can almost be said to be instinctive, biologic, archaic —or, less fancifully, our oldest knowledge of social conduct, a commandment, pre-logical; even their masters must feel a certain contempt for them, even their partisans must, even the prosecutors and police they serve. They're unclean; they leave a stain on the page no matter who writes the history. (William Buckley excepted. According to Joe McGinnis, in his odd little book *Heroes,* Buckley, when asked about heroes, had replied that "Whittaker Chambers certainly had seemed to be heroic." One notes the source, notes the hedge, and passes on.)

The friendly witnesses of course appeared in public before investigating committees or in courtrooms; the invisible ones appeared behind closed doors in "executive session" or more furtively than that as confidential "sources" whose identity was never disclosed, and not because there was any danger of retribution, as they claimed, unless retribution is defined as public contempt. Their identity could be guessed at but not definitively known. They could be anybody: as likely a total stranger as an old friend, a colleague, a member of the family. To this day they live among us; they did not write memoirs.

But neither did the unfriendly witnesses write memoirs. A few wrote fictional accounts, a form of disguise, though subterfuge wasn't the intention; but on the whole they were silent, though they were heroes of conscience. The period we call McCarthyism (which in reality began long before its namesake's hectic career and continued for some time after it drowned in booze and disgrace and which is always incipient in American life) was a bad time for constitutional law. The First Amendment was no defense; the Fifth was a stigma. Most Americans, asked to sign a petition consisting of the Bill of Rights, refused on the grounds that it was a subversive document, and in any case they just didn't sign petitions. No one wanted his name appended to anything. Some unfriendly witnesses went to prison; others left the country if they could manage to get out; all were blacklisted or otherwise barred from work by a gentleman's agreement, unless they contrived, as did some of the Hollywood writers, to work under a pseudonym (at a fraction of their usual rates). These were the well-publicized cases—writers, intellectuals, scientists, entertainers; and for whatever reason they did not choose to write about their ordeal.

Others were less contemptuous but no less victims: blacklisted teachers and assorted others who owing to some caprice in the system escaped notoriety or who, because they were obscure and therefore had little or no publicity value, simply disappeared from sight. More exactly: never having surfaced in the first place, they felt no need afterward to call attention to themselves. Instead they vanished into silence and still deeper obscurity: found new ways of making a living, kept their politics, if any remained, to themselves, signed nothing, attended no meetings, and for a long time dreaded the mail and the phone. By the time the Warren Court had helped clear the air somewhat and the climate of opinion had changed, they had long since assumed a virtual new identity and left behind with their abandoned old one whatever need they may once have felt to tell their story. By all rights there should have been a substantial body of such writings by now; there's almost none. For years, to cite a mere two examples from a large number of possible ones in my own limited experience, I expected two old friends, both well-known "cases" at the time, both having courageously rested their refusal to "talk" to HUAC on the First Amendment and both having lost their appeal to the Supreme Court and subsequently served sentences—for a long time I expected both men, one of whom was a writer, to tell their tale. Neither did.

Nor, for that matter, did I, and with less reason; though I promised and still promise myself that one day I shall, I must. Good reasons always lay near at hand: in the Fifties, who cared? who wanted to know? In the Sixties, it seemed beside the point; the moment had passed; without knowing it, behind my own back, I had become the "old Left"; my modest, unspectacular "past" came to seem to me myself what it was to my children—a period piece of no more than antique interest and uncertain meaning. An academic career (which I'd never really wanted in the first place) a minor academic career had been wrecked or at least derailed (and then embarrassingly restored by a curious circuitous route from pathos to farce —and once reestablished, freely aban-

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SAUL MALOFF*'s most recent novel is* Heartland (*Scribner's*).

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doned) and a passport denied (after the usual visit by the usual two agents of the FBI, one who growled and one who purred, and a futile, foredoomed hearing before a bleak, silent official of the Passport Office) until the decision by the Warren Court in the Robeson and Rockwell Kent cases ended that shabby episode in contemporary history—when I no longer wanted or could use a passport. (My flickering desire to do what is called research in the British Museum had been deemed contrary to the "national interest"—and for all I know Passport Officer Frances Shipley and J. E. Hoover were right in ways they couldn't have had in mind—plodding academic research directed toward the shimmering goal of tenure is assuredly not in the national interest.

The story, to my mind, is rich in comic detail, though at the time it was no laughing matter. In any case, each time I approached it, good reasons blocked my way. Other people had to be considered, after all; even now, they have to be considered; and one's life, patched up and taking unexpected turns, caused the past to recede exponentially in disconcerting ways, so that it seemed severed from the present. Overriding these and other considerations that seemed of interest only to myself was the problem of *form*. How should it be done? A straight factual account didn't interest me much at the time; didn't seem necessary. The possibility of fiction occurred and recurred but it afforded a disguise I fastidiously rejected. A memoir seemed presumptuous; and, as of its nature it occupies a spikey, treacherous territory somewhere between fact and fiction, verifiable event and the notorious quicksands of memory—memoir as such appeared to me to raise insuperable obstacles. Besides, it would have required the steady perspective of the first-person-singular, a voice that seemed to me impertinent. Who was I to employ it? A victim? I rejected, and reject, the role.

Moreover, it didn't apply: it distorted my experience, which was in queer ways liberating as wars can be for survivors. Who was I? A young man who had lost a couple of jobs and been denied the right to leave the country, had been compelled to take stock of himself and, using himself in new ways, required to find other things to do—other than being that pallid character the "untenured" junior professor and therefore a nonperson not only to university administrators but to the Academic Freedom Committee of the AAUP as well; who, as a legal nonentity serving at the pleasure of a university administration, had no recourse more noble than to "resign" his posts and go quietly. Refusing to resign and instead forcing the administration to fire one was merely quixotic: in cases involving untenured faculty on yearly contracts no "cause" need be shown. Making oneself the protagonist of a mass movement was not only temperamentally unacceptable—for me unthinkable—it was also out of the question. The "silent generation" of students in the Eisenhower Fifties went quietly about their business, which was Business; and the faculty, carefully husbanding their careers in hot pursuit of tenure—the great, good place; the city on a hill — looked the other way, though some particularly close friends made sympathetic sounds in whispered sibilants, while casting sidelong glances over both shoulders. There are no unsung heroes.

If there is no glorious literature of the period—something comparable, say, to the memoirs of Graves, Blunden, Sassoon rising out of the Great War—these are among the reasons. Meanwhile, as the distance between then and now stretched, the past in losing immediacy inevitably lost its urgency, if not for me then for others and one wanted to avoid all semblance of the bore at the dinner table going on and on about how things had gone for him during that famous war when the lights went out all over the world —only to find that when they went on again, all the guests were asleep.

Then and now, now and then: nearly 25 years elapsed between Lillian Hellman's famous appearance before HUAC in 1952 and the appearance of her memoir based on it, *Scoundrel Time* (Little, Brown, $7.95). Taken together with its two prodecessors (*An Unfinished Woman* and *Pentimento*) it is surely the finest work of a distinguished career and a notable work of autobiography by the most exacting standards; and though one hopes she goes on writing her memoirs, to the end of the century and beyond, this volume has the feel of an ending, not because she has exhausted her life as material for art or memoir (whole areas of her life are barely touched on and her writing is as spare, crabbed, idiosyncratic, expressive, granitic as ever, a direct reflection of a thorny, complex character) but because the climactic event is the one for which the others have been clearing a space all along—the obligatory scene in the drama of her life: the moral test and proving-ground. In the previous volumes the reader was always aware of its presence-by-absence in the zone just outside the lighted area of whatever scene was playing; or she would approach it again and again, allude to it, and leave it unscored, either because she was for some reason not yet ready for it or was saving it for the moment when the perspective had been drawn, the protagonist fully established, the ground prepared. Whatever the reason, she attached to this episode the meaning of her life; if a case were to be made for seeing the three volumes as a coherent, unitary work—a kind of spiritual autobiography—rather than a fairly random scattering of episodes, portraits, scenes, fragments, each of them autonomous or nearly so and held together only by the force of the writer's personality, it would have to be made in some such way as that: the creation of the character and accumulation of experience leading to ordeal and decisive trial.

But how was it to be done? Garry Wills introduces the volume with a scathing, if conventional analysis of the immediate origins of McCarthyism in the Cold War, anti-Communist vigilantism, Truman's Executive Orders, and the Hiss affair. The stage is set.

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In her own opening pages Lillian Hellman makes an attempt at historical analysis—and it lacks force and persuasiveness, an authoritativeness of tone and idea; it is exactly what Miss Hellman is not: ordinary, without distinction. Pondering statement is not her métier. But she evidently felt some sense of obligation to try her hand at it, however uncongenial to her temperament: after all, what befell her, and in another part of the forest her great friend Dashiell Hammett, was History, not merely a personal catastrophe, and as such it called for the heavy artillery of *analysis*. Having tried her hand at it, she breaks off abruptly, leaves standing the evidence of her attempt, and calls it quits. "But I don't want to write about my historical conclusions," she says impatiently,"—it isn't my game. I tell myself this third time out, if I stick to what I know, what happened to me, and a few others, I have a chance to write my own history of the time." The writer's literary bliss—that if you write truly and well of particulars, general truths will take care of themselves—accords perfectly with the nature of her gifts; in consequence, the "history" she writes is the history we need.

Unlike Hammett, Lillian Hellman was not (and is not), in a sense HUAC couldn't possibly understand, "political." Of course she was anti-fascist, she was the best kind—a "premature anti-fascist"; of course she held "progressive" views, and was on the "right side" of the issues, and no doubt attended meetings and signed petitions and contributed money—in short did those things that anyone even approximately human did at the time; and as she was fully human, such acts must have been virtually instinctive. But she was no ideologist; in saying this I do not mean to "clear" her of taint (an odious and persisting legacy of that period), only to stress the essential element of cranky unencompassable personality; a particularizing birthright. The decision she made was rooted in the rock of her character from the time the first crust formed. She speaks of herself as always having been "an aimless rebel," but the rebelliousness was grounded in the moral revulsion she felt at her mother's family having made money by exploiting Negroes. Hammett, she thinks, joined the Communist Party in the late Thirties but she's not sure because she never asked, and if she had asked would not have been answered. How do you explain to one who doesn't and can't understand that there's nothing furtive, secretive, about this: to have done otherwise would be a violation of privacy—prying, intrusive, unmannerly, not "done." Overtures, mild ones, were made by Earl Browder and the "theoretician" V. J. Jerome; but though it is none of our business she tells us she didn't join. She would have made

a lousy member of anything requiring unquestioning adherence to an imposed "line"; her reflexes and instincts were far too balky.

Everything about her confirms this, everything she helplessly *is*. Her language reflects it: the likes of McCarthy, Nixon and HUAC's other inquisitors probably should be characterized historically and politically, but to her they're "scoundrels," a "group of political villains," "corrupt and unjust men," society's untouchables, scummy. Perhaps in expressing a personal revulsion she comes closer to significant truth than does analysis on the grand scale. So with aesthetic criticism of ideology, a version, after all, of Orwell's linguistic criticism of politics. Three or four times, she says, she did go to meetings with Hammett, twice to an "ugly Spanish house in Hollywood," and once or twice to an apartment in New York which she can't recall any more than she can the people there, "maybe because I left after a short time." What she remembers, nearly forty years after the event, was that the chairman of one of the Hollywood meetings had unpleasant personal habits (as if the architecture wasn't bad enough!); that another man kept using the phrase "the face of the Party"; that two ladies talked a lot in a state of "high irritation." One of the ladies owned a fashionable dress shop and Miss Hellman was briefly impressed considering that the lady's radical politics might have cost her dearly had they been known to her clients; but as it happened the lady moved her shop when the scoundrel time encroached, and disaffiliated both from the party and from her brother, who went to jail for his affiliations.

What are we to make of this? This is what her memory retained, what sticks in her mind after all these years, and in the context they can only be intended to explain, at least in part, why she didn't join the Party—an open invitation to some, perhaps many, readers to think ill of her, to think her capricious, frivolous, self-indulgent, snobbish, as if causes were guilds limited in membership to the aristocracy of the spirit. Myself, I think—I've come to think—otherwise: that her visceral responses were an excellent guide to the perplexed: conduct reveals, manners tell.

So too with other great issues. Her "liking for black people maybe came," she can allow herself to say, not from ideological theories of national and class oppression, but from her love of her wet-nurse (of whom she has written movingly before); and so too her sympathy for the poor black and white. Then she brings herself up short by saying she's making her "political history too simple," that other factors "had to do with whatever I believed" and goes on to enumerate them: "personal conflicts, work problems, whiskey, too much money after *The Children's Hour*, the time of my time, Hammett" . . . all of them highly personal. Highly personal, "subjective," a dirty word to the ideologists of the Thirties, as against "objective,"

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the noblest word in their lexicon. Just before he collapsed into the open arms of the Committee, Clifford Odets, whom she hardly knew and hadn't seen in years, suddenly asked her to dinner, to ask what she planned to do when subpoenaed. She didn't know; but by God he knew! He scared the hell out her, she says, with all that pounding the table and yelling. They'd see—they'd see what the Man of Tomorrow looked like, the proletarian hero. He was going to show those "bastards on the Committee . . . the face of a radical man and tell them to go fuck themselves." When his big scene came, he couldn't supply the scalps of friends, acquaintances, associates, colleagues to HUAC fast enough; had they asked for it he would have given them his liver, having already given his heart and mind.

Earlier he had told Miss Hellman he wanted to talk to her about "political and moral convictions"; and when she let him down badly by saying she didn't want to talk about convictions because when she does "I'm never sure I'm telling the truth," he told her sternly that her friend Hammett had convictions and he admired him. She didn't tell him that Hammett had walked out on *Awake and Sing* "because I don't think writers who cry about not having had a bicycle when they were kiddies are ever going to amount to much." Odets stayed in Hollywood, what remained of it after the carnage; Hammett went to jail. Elia Kazan, too; like his old friend Odets, the friendliest of witnesses; it wasn't enough to deliver heads, he had to follow his testimony with a once-notorious advertisement in the *New York Times* "that is hard to believe for its pious shit."

When Lillian Hellman told Odets she didn't know what she would do under fire she meant just that: she didn't know, couldn't predict, how she would behave. Not that there was any possible question of her conducting herself less than honorably; it was a matter of detail: how could she know before the fact that she might not throw up or fling objects? She wrote her celebrated letter to the Committee, and went to Washington to await the appointed time. She didn't go to the National Gallery, though she thought she should; instead she went to the zoo and wondered (according to her diary notes for May 16, 1952) what it would be like to go to bed with an orangutan. For the first time in years she had to worry about money: by now Hammett, all his assets seized by the IRS, was blacklisted and she knew her big-money days were over for as far ahead as she could see. Desperately worried about money, she nevertheless decided to spend a lot of it before meeting the hangmen: steak and caviar and an expensive Balmain testifying dress and a very expensive hat and a fine pair of white kid gloves to go with it—and threw in a hundred dollar gift for the hospitalized wife of a cabdriver with whom she'd struck up an itinerant friendship. Dressed to the nines she'd do what she had to do when the time came. "It's all been decided so long ago," she noted in her diary, "when you are very young, and all mixed up with your childhood's definition of pride or dignity."

HUAC was what it was; it is always with us; what more need be said? Miss Hellman's special wrath, a wonder to behold, is reserved for the intellectuals who stood by while it happened, either by maintaining silence or by giving their assent—*Partisan Review*, *Commentary* (Norman Podhoretz at last, in the April, 1976 issue of that journal, publicly embraced McCarthyism), Irving Kristol, all the others for whom "Truth made you a traitor . . . in a time of scoundrels." "Lives were being ruined and few hands were raised in help," she observes; and adds: "Since when do you have to agree with people to defend them from injustice?" In mitigation she could have pointed out to the Committee that the Party had attacked *Watch on the Rhine*, her anti-Nazi play written at the "wrong" time, the period of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, but that would have been a violation of the rules she lived by, her "thin morality book" and its stern injunction that "it is plain not cricket to clear yourself by jumping on people who are themselves in trouble."

In her letter to HUAC, she offered to talk about herself and about no one else but herself. Inevitably, the offer was refused; HUAC's reason for being was to compel witnesses to talk about "others," to perform the "ugly business" of making "cowards into liars." Hence the Fifth Amendment defense. At the time she was widely congratulated by right-thinking persons for her stand; but she was, and is, rightly, I think, unhappy with it. Even to have written the equivocal letter was a concession to the Committee of its right to exist, an acknowledgment, as she says, of their power and therefore their legitimacy; and her offer to talk about herself was a defeat for her and experienced as such. She should have gone into the Committee room, she now says and then thought, "given my name and address, and walked out." Hammett had told her that as she was fearful of rats, she couldn't take jail; and she says with moving candor that she would have walked out "if I hadn't worried about rats in jail, and such. . . . Ah, the bravery you tell yourself was possible when it's all over, the bravery of the staircase." Not the stuff of which epic poetry is made; but she's not writing epic poetry; she's writing memoir, personal history, and phobia played a part in it. "Just make sure," she told herself, "you come out unashamed." She has still not quite forgiven herself for failing to attain that state of perfection.

Lean times followed, bad times. She and Hammett were stone broke; the farm they loved had to be sold, the most painful episode of her life, together with her movingly sad farewell to the deer she loved, an unbearable wrenching. A bone-weary "after-the-war" feeling settles into the book of her life, a kind of listlessness and drift and confusion before a deep inner clarity reasserts itself.

(A note on ideology and criticism, partisanship and reviewing. An unsympathetic reader might recoil from the farewell-to-the-deer scene, as I was touched by it; seeing it not as em-

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blematic of the ordeal, of the price of Conscience, but as maudlin, lachrymose, sentimental, false, self-dramatizing—an abject appeal for sympathy. Conversely, another reader might insist, with the relentless purity of safe distance, that such concessions as she offered the Committee were and are unforgivable; that she should have stood outright on the Fifth or First Amendment, should have told the Committee to go to hell if it came to it, and herself gone to jail, the rats be damned. That reader might also argue she should never have requested, or accepted, Mrs. Shipley's grant of a limited passport in order that she might take a sorely-needed offer of a screenwriting job in Italy. A passport is not a privilege, a favor which a government may confer or deny or limit as it fancies; it is a right of democratic citizenship. To subject herself to Mrs. Shipley's interrogation, she says, was "degrading"; and it was.)

Finally assessing the experience at the end, she allows herself to yield to the temptation of grand statement, a kind of self-indulgence that would have been wildly out of character. She measures a civilized country by its moral capacity to generate people who "come forward to defend those in political trouble," adding there "was once even some honor in being a political prisoner." Those who remained silent, she says, harmed the country, those who "went to too many respectable conferences that turned out not to be under respectable auspices, contributed to and published too many CIA magazines. The step from such capers was straight into the Vietnam War and the days of Nixon." As for herself, she remarks, her "belief in liberalism was mostly gone," and she has "substituted for it something private called, for want of something that should be more accurate, decency." That's as accurate as need be, the best kind of politics where the instinct for decency is unerring.

Now and then, then and now. In the brief coda, she says the past is always there, the past which was then and the present which is now and the years in between; but at last having written it "the then and now are one." A "finished" woman, a diamond-in-the-rough, a jewel without price.

BOOKS

HUNGERING FOR HISTORY

WALLACE FOWLIE

Andre Malraux
JEAN LACOUTURE
Pantheon, $12.95

Through the course of this biography, we watch a man quite deliberately assuming a role in history. All his achievements of writer, interpreter of history, defender of causes, have been, before his death, recognized and applauded and . . . variously interpreted. His work, begun before that of Camus and Sartre, has continued after theirs ceased having the influence they exerted in the 1940s. André Malraux has had no disciples in the usual literary-philosophical sense, and whatever influence he has had is practically indefinable.

This book of Jean Lacouture is both the life story of Malraux and a close passionate history of a half century of French political thought and political parties, of the roles played by Malraux in Indo-China, China, Germany, United States and other countries. A most difficult biography to write, first because of Malraux's reticence about his personal life, and because of his unwillingness to state positively his beliefs, affinities, and activities. Historical truth concerning his life and actions is not always accessible. As far as possible, M. Lacouture, a most accomplished biographer, makes use of documents: novels, speeches, dialogues, letters, and especially the *Antimémoires*.

Malraux remains an enigmatic personality, but this biographer provides many insights concerning the man, especially the public man. Some of the insights are hypotheses that will never be substantiated in a totally satisfactory way. We are constantly made aware of Malraux's remarkable intelligence, of his nervous energy, and of the strong public personality he demonstrated at every point in his career. His character is best defined in his search for fraternity, provided that the search demanded from him courage and heroism. T. E. Lawrence's life fascinated Malraux. In fact, Lawrence and Rimbaud were persistent ghosts in the background of Malraux's adventures in Indo-China and Asia.

His long relationship with De Gaulle seemed to satisfy Malraux's hunger for history. For almost thirty years his career and his destiny were allied with De Gaulle's. Both men were actors in a few of the great dramas of modern history. They had similar views on history, on the role of France in history, on the need for them to remain independent and alone. Even in spiritual terms the absolute agnosticism of André Malraux resembles the absolute faith of Charles De Gaulle.

Malraux looked upon De Gaulle as the last great man to be obsessed with the concept of France. When De Gaulle asked Malraux to help him in the

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name of France, in 1945, the general certainly preferred Bernanos and Mauriac as writers, but he knew that Malraux's views coincided with his own. This was proved later when, between 1958 and 1969, Malraux, as minister in charge of cultural affairs, wanted paintings, sculpture and architecture to increase the glory of France.

This biography is not a work of literary criticism. Mr. Lacouture discusses each of the novels, the volumes of art criticism, and the valuable prefaces Malraux wrote for other writers, but the discussion is always in terms of the moment in history when the work was conceived and written, and the success or lack of success the work knew. Gaëtan Picon still remains in France the most penetrating critic of Malraux's literary achievements. His pages would have to be read in conjunction with Lacouture's in order to have a full estimate of Malraux the writer and Malraux the man of history.

Even if he grants it relatively little space, M. Lacouture is well aware that the novel *La Condition Humaine (Man's Fate)* is the work on which Malraux's reputation is founded. The title, taken from Montaigne and Pascal, draws full attention not only to the theme of the book but to all of his writings and to the effort of his life,

Andre Malraux

if that can be summarized in a phrase. Even in the year of its publication, 1933, it was recognized as marking a turning point in the history of the novel. It refused the usual treatment of psychology in the French novel, and it renounced the traditional subject matter of fiction. The tense style of the sentences and the somber images sparingly used in the text, revealed the anxiety both conscious and subconscious of humanity at that time in history. "Man's fate" was indeed the subject of this book that announced the disasters that were to torture Europe a few years later. In this powerful story of China in 1926, the novel seemed to be returning to its violent origins in the epic.

Jean Lacouture finds in *L'Espoir,* the novel about Spain, a greater sense of dynamic tragedy than critics traditionally find in it. He reminds us that the film Malraux himself helped to make from *L'Espoir,* has had no commercial popular success. Only James Agee sensed its epic quality when he wrote: "Homer might recognize in it the only work of our time in accord with his own."

Justifiably this biographer draws constantly on *Antimémoires,* the "anti-memoirs" of Malraux, as the clue to the curious way in which the writer

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projected his views, his movements, his encounters with so many eminent world figures. *Antimémoires* is not an account of Malraux's life. There is much confusion in it about what is true and what is imaginary. Were the conversations with Mao Tse-tung true? Were the conversations with Nehru true?

Malraux remained a revered master for young people in France and elsewhere, as long as they believed that he had actually participated in the historical events related in his novels, but now that strong doubts have been cast over the reality of this participation, his position in the minds of the young has changed. This biography is the most elaborate effort yet made to distinguish the legends of the man from the life that he actually led. No longer, for example, can we believe that Malraux was a militant Communist in the Chinese revolution of 1926. Even while serving De Gaulle as a minister, he continued to show independence of thought and action.

When André Malraux came to the United States in March 1937, under the auspices of *The Nation*, and spoke at several colleges and universities on behalf of the Spanish loyalists, he had already begun his writing on art. After the war, his principal work was his three volume *Psychologie de l'art* (1947-50). These volumes, while not acceptable to most scholars in art history, do reveal Malraux's encyclopedic culture, his skill in discovering talent, his desire to join with what is familiar in artistic culture elements less well known of primitive art. And always in these volumes, as well as in the most recent volumes published since M. Lacouture wrote his biography in 1973, the leading questions return for which André Malraux does not yet have the answer: who is man? what must he do?

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REVIEWERS

WALLACE FOWLIE is a professor of French at Duke. His most recent book is a critical study of Lautréamont.

PHILIP TERZIAN is Assistant Production Manager of *The New Republic*.

WILLIAM J. LANOUETTE is on the staff of *The National Observer*.

Born Again

CHARLES W. COLSON

Chosen Books, $8.95

PHILIP TERZIAN

It is certainly a sign of the times that the principal debate about this book—if there is any at all—is whether Charles Colson's conversion to fundamentalist Christianity was staged with an eye to a short prison sentence for his Watergate transgressions. I can state with the categorical assurance of a onetime McGovern voter that it was not; and, indeed, may ask that even if it were, so what? If the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ is not sought in times of personal anguish and foreboding, what purpose has it? "Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

Now, let me declare my prejudices: Charles Colson was one of the least worthy soldiers of that malicious army, the Nixon administration. Consuming prodigous draughts of the Treasury to assure the aggrandizement (and re-election) of Richard Nixon, his militant dedication to dishonorable politics is well known and, for that matter, acknowledged and analyzed in this book.

Within a few months of leaving the White House staff in 1973, the whole arrogant structure of the Nixonian palace crashed before Colson's feet. It is, I think, a measure of the enormity of Watergate in human terms that so self-assured and one-dimensional a figure as Colson could be shaken to take the steps that he has. This, in view of the almost universal cynicism with which his new-found religiosity was greeted, can only emphasize the unhappy extent to which we allow secular affairs to consume us, leaving us, in the face of adversity, naked and afraid. Of course, if Colson had practiced Christian ethics a few years earlier the whole exercise would have been unnecessary, but that is another matter.

Strictly speaking, there are more agreeable techniques for what Colson has done. I, for one, have an admittedly fastidious antipathy to the whole phenomenon of 'born again' faith, couched as it is in simplistic terms and generally presided over by charlatans like Billy Graham. Further, as declarations of faith go, Colson's is a bit too quick for comfort. It would be well if he gave himself more time to sort things out and settle comfortably into his new posture. A decent interval might have assured his *apologia* a more thoughtful reception from the not-very-interested world. These are private matters, after all, and are best left to simmer before public display. As it is, *Born Again* is subject to the usual suspicions about motive, and the White House hatchet man of not so very long ago will have to answer charges of merchandising. But, Colson is no theologian, much less an intellect, and I suppose in his inelegant way he thought this was the right thing to do.

What intrigues me about the book—aside from the few tantalizing peeps inside the White House, a note on that later—is that inasmuch as it teaches an inadvertent lesson, the lesson has gone, and will undoubtedly go, unlearned. That is, if we are putative Christians, we should, painful as it is, judge the Nixons and the Colsons with forgiveness, accepting this book, at any rate, in the spirit in which it is given. We have, after all, the assurance that Good has triumphed. The canker has been lanced; now it is up to us to be magnanimous. But that is not what has happened.

In the face of Watergate its victims have reared back and delivered in a tenor of vengeance so violent that I have come to fear them more than I ever did Richard Nixon. What a carnival of pent-up hatred Washington has become, the proverbial jackboot ravaging Nixon's supine face! We are now digesting the latest (and I trust last) *Washington Post* revelation of the "final days" of the administration, a compendium of malice and human vivisection that borders on the sadistic. Its prospective readers are already licking their chops in morbid anticipation. And for what? Can we not conceive the extent to which this corrupts the already demoralized human spirit? What is the point of deploring the amorality of

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Richard Nixon while, facing him down, becoming his mirror image? Said Orwell in 1945: "Revenge is an act that you want to commit when you are powerless and because you are powerless: as soon as the sense of impotence is removed, the desire evaporates also." I am afraid there is some distance to go before that obtains here, but perhaps *Born Again*, in its artless fashion, may serve as a signpost along the way.

Note: Chroniclers of the imperial presidency will appreciate the reproduction of a letter from Richard Nixon addressed to Colson in prison. Nixon refers to his resignation and spells the word with a capital R. It is almost sad to think that such petty vanity must constitute solace.

Official National Lampoon Bicentennial Calendar

CHRISTOPHER CERF & BILL EFFROS

Vintage Books, $3.95

The 199th Birthday Book

The National Lampoon, $2.95

WILLIAM J. LANOUETTE

Our national buy-centennial is gaining momentum now; picking up speed in our headlong (and headstrong) rush toward the ultimate frenzy of July 4. There's no escaping it—unless you can retreat to some remote hollow and live on wild mushrooms, berries, and spring water.

Since most of us can't escape the hoopla, why not just enjoy it? Why not take the hypocrisy for what it is, and learn to love our country *despite* it's birthday bathos? The Peoples Bicentennial Commission is doing much to help us through this year's assorted official traumas. And for day-to-day survival there are two delightfully sardonic items in the commercial cascade that are well worth their modest prices.

The Official National Lampoon Bicentennial Calendar is a compendium of little known or un-remembered events guaranteed to make you chuckle —or cringe—with each passing day. The year begins with a note from Jan. 1, 1781: "Many are wounded as mutinous Pennsylvania Revolutionary War troops at Morristown, N.J., rush from their huts, seize arms, ammunition, and horses, seize six pieces of artillery, and, after subduing three regiments of loyal soldiers, march to Philadelphia to demand back pay from Congress." And, we close out our 200th birthday with this Dec. 31 entry: "1901 The worst year in the twentieth century for lynchings ends with a tally of 130 (105 blacks, 25 whites)."

The calendar also offers a monthly tally of assassination attempts, complete with a key to show how many victims are "killed," "wounded," or "escape unharmed." Along with our most famous assassinations are also a few we may have forgotten. For example, on Feb. 6, 1947 "Three shots are fired at Hubert Humphrey, the Mayor of Minneapolis, as he returns home after a political meeting. All three bullets miss their mark, and no trace is ever found of the would-be assassin."

Our glorious past as "policeman to the world" is also celebrated, with 24 separate entries for the times that American forces were sent to "protect U.S. interests." Nicaragua appears to have been the best-policed, with six invasions (1863, 1895, 1909, 1912, 1926, and 1927). And, considering our previous involvements in Lebanon (1903 and 1958) it's surprising we've shown such restraint during the most recent strife there.

It's perhaps encouraging to note the decline of some forms of national exuberance, such as witch hangings, anti-Catholic riots, gangland massacres, and violent policing of labor demonstrations. But as the old ways disappear, new ones appear to replace them. Atomic power, for example, which has only been a part of our history since 1945, already rates 19 calendar entries. Among the notable atomic events are the deaths of three workers at a reactor, numerous mishaps involving airplanes carrying A-bombs, and an episode of radioactive rainfall over Troy, N.Y.

The calendar isn't entirely grim, however. It also notes that on Jan. 20, 1964 "With a $35,000 appropriation from the state treasury safely in hand, the Wisconsin Cheese Foundation starts making the 'World's Largest Cheese'—a 34,591-pound cheddar." All academia can be proud of Aug. 28, 1938, when "Northwestern University confers an honorary degree on ventriloquist's dummy Charley McCarthy." And auto buffs will surely recall Sept. 4, 1957, the day Ford introduced the Edsel.

The illustrations for this calendar are superbly done, taking inglorious moments from our history and re-creating them in the styles of famous, native artists. January's "California Ducks, after John James Audubon" shows two feathered creatures struggling with fresh coats of crude oil. March's "An Impromptu Departure, after Charles Dana Gibson," shows a famous Gibson Girl plunging to her death from the Triangle Shirt-Waist Co. Other scenes include the Utah sheep kill, by nerve gas, after Grandma Moses; a diagram of the Warren Commission's single-bullet theory, after Rube Goldberg; and

Pius VI,
Pope in the Age of Revolution

Invested in 1775, he died a captive in Napoleon's France in 1799. America was a mission field. Many missions and a centennial later, the American Catholic bishops under another Pope, Leo XIII, were founding a national pontifical university to serve Church and nation. The Catholic University of America moves into America's third century with a renewed commitment to values in education and a new center, the School of Religious Studies. Pius VI may have been a victim of revolutions. We are the inheritors.

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Women's Plight

AT THE International Women's Year World Conference sponsored by the UN in Mexico, sharp divisions appeared immediately, with significant differences of approach obvious between the women-delegates from the developed countries and those from the developing nations. Delegate after delegate from the poorer areas made it plain that they were not particularly interested in sexism, abortion and similar topics considered vital by many of the women from the Western industrialized nations; instead they insisted on the need for a new international political and economic order. . . .

No one should underestimate how far women around the world have to travel to achieve a decent and dignified status. Bad as is the lot of men in the poorer countries, the woman's is even worse. Because men are considered more valuable in less advanced cultures, boys are favored over girls from birth on, even on such fundamentals as how much food is allotted to each. To the illiterate, most roads are closed, yet about 500 million of the world's females are totally unable to read or write. By any index available, whether food allotted, life expectancy, infant mortality or whatever, the gap between the average impoverished woman in the developing countries and the typical American female is incredibly wide. They are step-sisters at best, living in separate worlds, and this fact fully explains and justifies the interest of the delegates from the developing countries in pushing for consideration of larger economic and political questions. Sexual equality is a noble goal, but in the poorer nations in particular it makes sense only in terms of drastic reforms in economic and political structures. There is, after all, not too much point in being equally free to suffer from malnutrition.

—*Commonweal*, August 1, 1975

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7-2-76

Christmas Seals depicting the 1972 Christmas Bombing in Vietnam.

As with the bicentennial itself, the *Lampoon*'s efforts stray occasionally into bad taste and error. June's illustration of the Rosenbergs in the electric chair strikes me as needlessly blunt. And the artistic style, while attributed to Norman Rockwell, seems much closer to Maxfield Parrish. The calendar also dates the Treaty of Paris in 1784, not 1783. But these are minor transgressions when compared with the conception and wit of the whole work. You might even find that this daily digest of gloom and stupidity will actually make you *glad* to celebrate our country's birthday—glad, that is, that we've actually survived for two whole centuries.

A companion piece, the *National Lampoon*'s *The 199th Birthday Book*, is an affectionate chronicle of America's foibles, from odd-ball religious sects to our fixation with the future. It, too, has occasional lapses of good taste. But they're minor when compared with the wealth of genuinely funny concoctions. From its opening painting of three minute-men cowering before the British, to its catalogue from America's Third Centennial Expo in 2076, the book's tour of our history is bound to give you a store of funny recollections to help you through the real drivel later this year.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 419)

scale employers like what they call a "loose" labor market. And the Nixon-Ford administration has faithfully served the interests of those major employers.

But the most serious aspect of this matter lies in the phrase so often used by Richard Nixon—"the great silent majority." For in the United States that majority consists of reasonably affluent people who are neither young, poor, nor members of minority groups. If that comfortable majority can be persuaded to blame all their problems

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on the poor, the young, and the minorities—worse still, if the affluent majority can be made to fear those three groups, then the spirit of tolerance, understanding and decent compassion which must mark any really civilized society is threatened. And the road to fascism is wide and open.

The attempt to hold political power by such tactics is dangerous and reprehensible. It should be resisted and condemned by every thoughtful American, and especially by any who dare to call themselves Christians or followers of the Christ. JERRY VOORHIS

Charismatics

Potomac, Md.

To the Editors: I would like to make two comments about Ralph Keifer's review of five books dealing with charismatic renewal in the March 26 *Commonweal.* First, what was written was less a review than it was Ralph Keifer's own view of charismatic renewal which seems to be in sympathy with that of Joseph Fichter. Michael Hamilton's book is summarily dismissed in six sentences. One of the excellent articles in that book is by Krister Stendahl, Dean of Harvard Divinity School. Mr. Keifer, in one of the six sentences, tells us there is little in the book about the Catholic phase of the movement. Does this immediately make it less valuable?

The three books by Kilian McDonnell, Cardinal Suenens and Elizabeth Hamilton, with the exception of three later mentions of McDonnell's name, and one of Suenens, are dismissed with one sentence apiece in the first paragraph. The entire remainder of the "review" is a mixture of Keifer and Fichter. It looks very much as though any book that was sympathetic to charismatic renewal would get short shrift from Mr. Keifer.

The second point I want to make is that Mr. Keifer calls Fichter's book a "disciplined" study. I think in all fairness Mr. Keifer should have made mention of Fichter's lack of a control group. Even Andrew Greeley, hardly one sympathetic to charismatic renewal, was put in the embarrassing position of having to say when he reviewed Fichter's book that it was a bad book. How could Fichter make such an error as to omit having a control group? How could Mr. Keifer fail to be aware of the lack of scientific validity of Fichter's book?

JUDITH C. TYDINGS

REPLY: Re Hamilton's book: any book (pro or con) which projects an image of the movement as a tongues-speaking devotional phenomenon projects a caricature. The presence of names like those of Josephine Massyngberde Ford and Krister Stendahl in the collection does not save the collection from this inadequacy.

While I was aware of the shortcomings of Fichter's study, I reviewed it as significant because it pointed to aspects of the movement which have received too little public attention. This movement has galvanized the laity as no movement has since the Middle Ages, and it therefore deserves serious attention. If that attention is to be truly serious, it must be critical as well as sympathetic. The issues are not the emotive quality of charismatic prayer or the legitimacy of speaking in tongues, nor is the issue the spiritual uplift of a Cardinal of the Roman Church. The issue is the potential for good or ill that the movement as a whole presents to the church.

RALPH A. KEIFER

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

Corrections

Joanne Barkan Proctor was misidentified in the note accompanying the article co-authored by her, "Dilemma of the Communist Party," in the May 21 *Commonweal.* She is an editor at Croft-NEI Publications in Waterford, Conn.

A displaced line on page 372 of the June 4 *Commonweal* resulted in a garbled section in Saul Maloff's commentary on the book *Letters Home,* by Sylvia Plath; *Correspondence 1950-1963* (Harper & Row). In column one, the first sentence of the third paragraph should read:

Sylvia Plath's "letters home," (all save a handful written to her mother Aurelia from the time she left home in Wellesley, Massachusetts, in 1950 for Smith College to the week before her death in 1963) are truly appalling.

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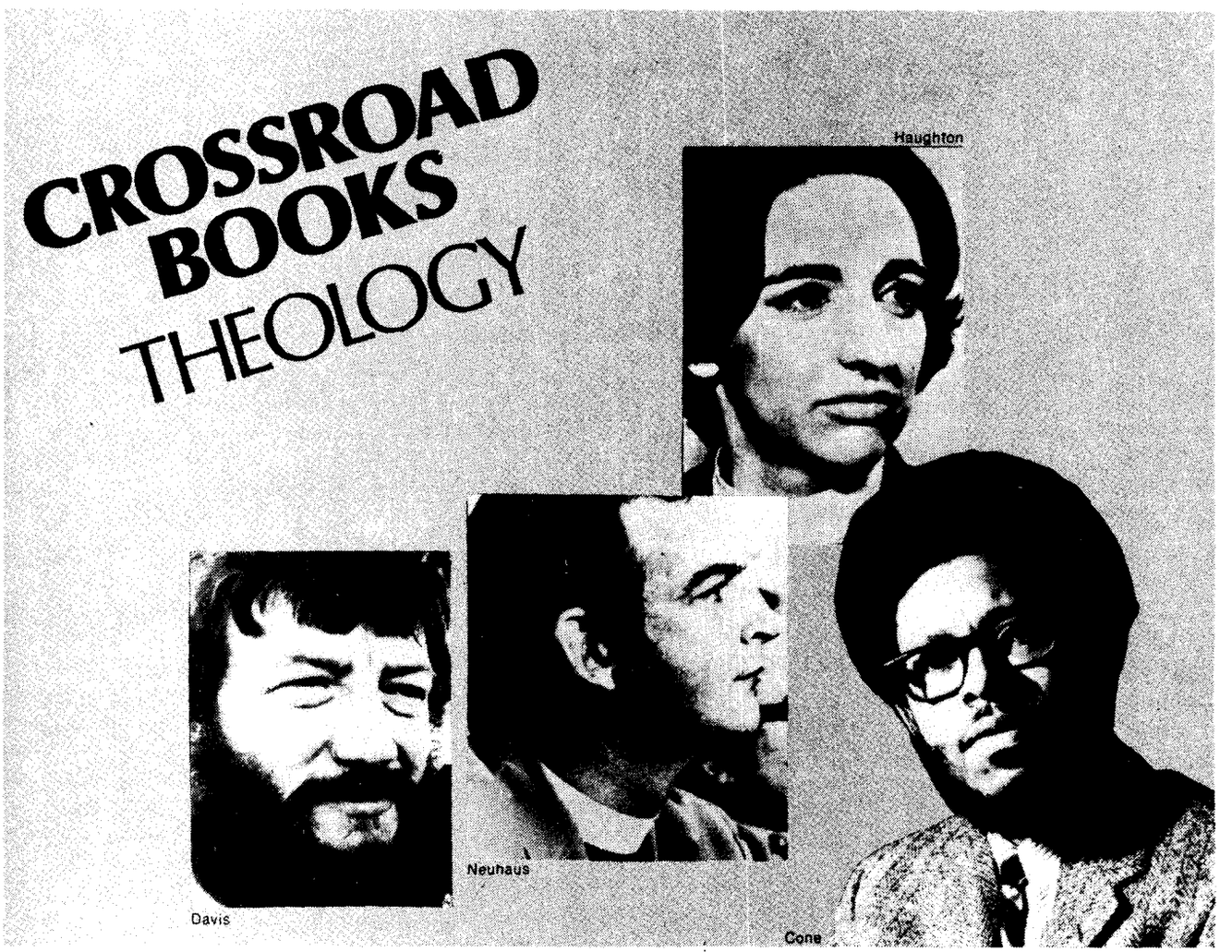

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